

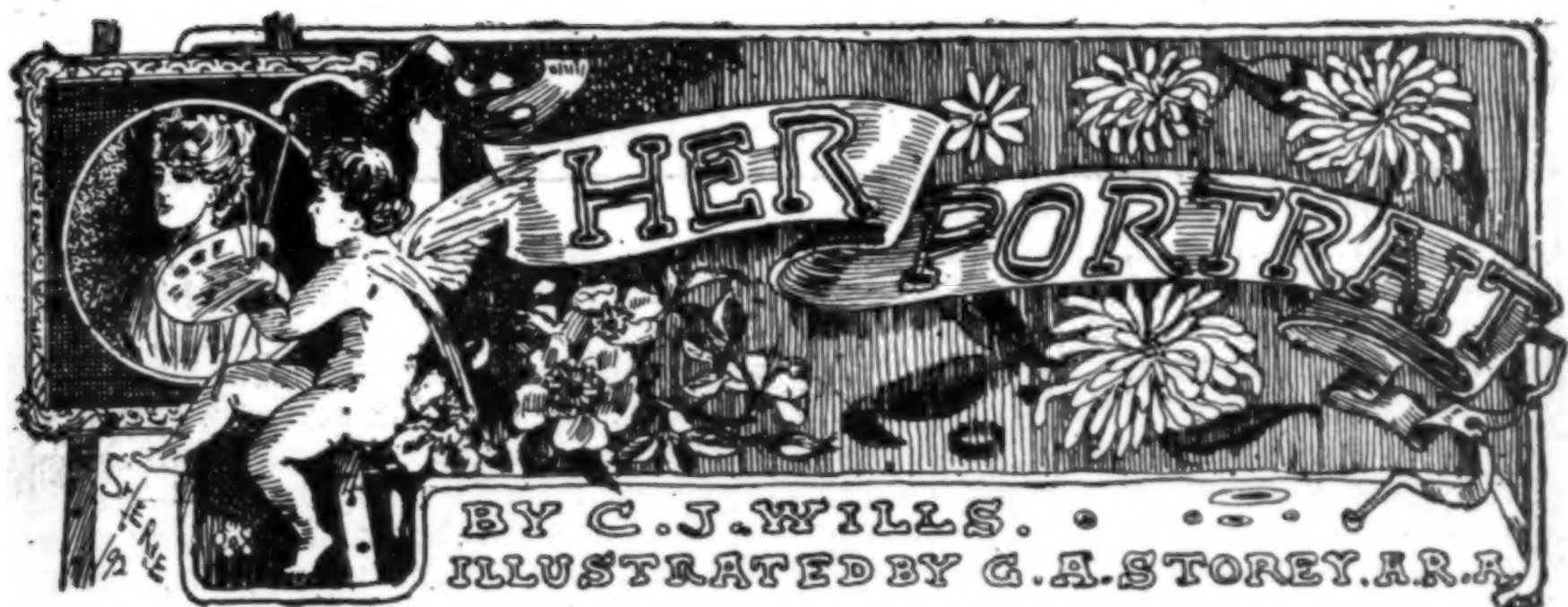


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THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER.

By G. A. STOREY, A.R.A.



CHAPTER IX.

OLD CHUMS.

"**P**A," said Miss Worleybone, in her father's ear, 'you hear what he says.'

"If Sophy likes it, Mr. P.," replied the indulgent father, 'that's enough for me. There's my kyard, you can tell 'em to send it along. It aint a a picter that I should hanker after myself; it's more in your line, Sophy, than mine.'

"Ah, father," said the girl, as she flung herself into an attitude and gazed at the picture, 'I can look at it with the Eye of Faith!' And then Mr. Ussher buried his face in his handkerchief, and his back heaved with convulsive sobs.

"When Mr. Piedpiper thrust Mr. Worleybone's card into the corner of the mount, he started; but he never said a word, for Piedpiper is, as we all know, a man of the world."

Then Phillida, her morning's work being over, started for Lower Calthorpe Street; while Walter Croft remarked in a casual sort of way to Milner as he left the studio:

"Good-bye, Boss; I don't feel up to doing any more work on such a hot day as this, so don't expect me till the morning."

"On duty with the widow, I suppose," thought Milner. "Poor young fellow!" he added mentally, with a deep drawn sigh.

"I'm glad I spoke out," thought John Milner, "it was time I did; that little puss was getting a great deal too fond of Walter; not that the child knew it though, but to me it was as plain as a pikestaff.

It's a sort of rule with young people, they always get fond of the property of somebody else. Why, bless me, when I was a very young fellow, how fond I used to be of Adelaide; I used to look upon Adelaide as a poetic dream of loveliness; and now I'm sure that she's absolutely the most prosaic and common-sense person I know. I shall never forget when my aunt broke the fact of Adelaide's engagement to the doctor to me. Why, it took me a good six months to recover from Adelaide; and she was an uncommonly pretty girl thirty years ago. There's nothing of the snob about Walter; he's too fond of his work, and too much enamoured of that heartless little widow to turn miscellaneous Lovelace. Why, most young fellows when they are half as good-looking as Walter Croft, with plenty of time on their hands, and plenty of money in their pockets, make love to every pretty girl they come across, just to keep their hands in, I suppose; but Walter isn't that sort. If it wasn't for his money and his mistress, the young fellow would make his mark; but his time is too much taken up with his duties at Lexham Gardens, and when he ought to be working, he's peacocking about with the lady. Well, I suppose it's what the world calls a suitable match; they're both wealthy, and they're both good-looking; but if we could only go back to the age of innocence, I fancy Master Walter would be far better off with our penniless little model, who wears her heart upon her sleeve, than with the

secondhand affections of a wealthy and fashionable widow, five years his senior. Society and late hours will play the deuce with her good looks, she'll be a hag in ten years' time: they say she married old Dacre for his money, so now, I suppose, she thinks she's earned the right to please herself—earned it—yes, that's the exact word. Well, Walter may do some good for Art yet; he'll develope into an intelligent patron, I suppose. I'd rather see him develope into an intelligent patron than into an unintelligent malignant critic. It's getting uncommonly hot," thought John Milner. "A day or two sketching wouldn't be a bad thing; I'll take the boy with me, it'll do both of us good, and we'll go down into Kent in a fortnight, and travel third; that travelling third always acts as a wonderful mental tonic to Master Walter, and does him a power of good."

At this moment the studio door opened, and John Milner's housekeeper announced Mr. Bland.

Mr. Bland was a tall, thin, pale gentleman of aristocratic appearance, who was dressed in the height of the fashion, and who sported an orchid in his particularly well cut, grey walking coat: he wore his silvery hair rather long, as had been the fashion in his youth; he was clean shaven, and nobody had ever seen Mr. Bland in anything but a very new hat of the pattern of twenty years ago. He didn't take off the hat as he entered the studio, and he shouted out in a cheery voice as he seized John Milner's hand, "Well, Jack, my boy, how are you?"

"Billy, my buck," cried Milner, you're a sight for sore eyes."

It seems a sort of sacrilege that any man should address a Royal Academician, as "Billy;" but Mr. William Bland, R.A., and John Milner had been chums and cronies ever since their student days, and, strange to say, although Bland was now at the very top of the professional tree, they were chums and cronies still. Jealous people said that William Bland was a courtier. There was some truth in that. If he hadn't been a courtier, he probably would not have done as well as he has; but Bland was a great artist in his way all the same. Surely it is no crime to be a scholar and a gentleman. Everybody agreed that Bland's works were beautiful, and that his draughtsmanship was perfect. He had been a pupil of Delaroche, the most classical of all the French painters,

and he adhered to the traditions, and his enemies said to the tricks and faults, of the school in which he had been educated. The critics all declared that his works, which invariably portrayed some classical legend or other, were masterpieces. No great collection was complete without an example of William Bland, R.A. His classical masterpieces brought him name and fame; but it was not by his classical masterpieces that he had made his money, it was by his beautiful portraits of beautiful women. There never was a woman on the face of God's earth that hadn't some good point about her, and when she sat to William Bland, if she were a pretty woman she became handsome, if she were a handsome woman she became beautiful, under the dexterous brush of a man who always did his sitters justice, and perhaps something more. And yet William Bland swore that he never flattered; and he made the declaration honestly enough, for there are some men, you know, who always see the world through rose-coloured spectacles. People knew perfectly well when they gave a commission to Bland for a portrait, that they were absolutely certain of obtaining something that would please and gratify. The thing would cost a good deal of money, no doubt, but then it was quite certain to be worth the money; and Bland's female portraits were, invariably, dreams of fair women. As for his great classical works, it is perhaps best to tell the truth at once—most of them went to America. Bland was an accomplished man; he went into society a great deal, in fact, he was one of the pillars of society; no great function was complete without him, and he had an immense reputation as an after-dinner speaker; and his utterances on Art were worth listening to, perhaps because the man understood what he was talking about; perhaps because, though fond of sesquipedalian periods, he was ever graceful and never prolix.

After they had chatted for a few minutes, Bland turned towards his friend's half-finished picture, "The Miller's Daughter." He was silent for an instant, and then he laid his hands on his old friend's shoulder, and said, "We can none of us touch you, Jack. You're English, my boy, English to the backbone. She's beautiful, she's very beautiful. You must have been very lucky in your model, Jack."

"You ought to know something about

beauty," said John Milner with a laugh; "you've dealt in it for thirty years, and you've made a pretty penny out of it."

"Don't be unkind, Jack," said the other man. "I know I live in a glass house, and I hate stone-throwing. What do you call it?"

"Well, I call it *The Miller's Daughter*," replied John Milner.

"It's a competition. You know young Croft, that pupil of mine whom I introduced to you, he's my competitor."

"What, the young fellow that's going to marry that little viper, Mrs. Dacre?" asked Bland.

"That's the boy," replied the other. Then Milner wheeled out young Croft's easel, and pointing to his pupil's work, said with a sigh, "We should have rendered her as he has done, Bland, if we had been thirty years younger."

"He's failed to catch the touch of sadness that you have made the most of, Milner," said Bland; "but it's a good picture all the same, and it does him credit."

"And you'll hang it, I suppose?"

"Can you ask: we shall only be too glad to get it. I say, Jack," he continued, "why don't you bury the hatchet, and send us something?"

"Because I can't trust you, my boy. No, I don't care about exhibiting; you chucked me twenty years ago, when it made all the difference to me whether I was hung or not; and the picture you chucked was a good picture. I send to the Institute still because they like me to,

but I've done with the establishment over the way. You see it's this way, Bland, if I wanted a shop it might be different; but I don't want a shop. Melchisedek, and Ahitophel, and Mac Scorchers, and Grinders, they always turn up. And why on earth should I show? Why, half the pictures that are shown are merely exposed for sale, and the other half are exhibited to gratify the vanity of the sitter or the purchaser. Melchisedek will take care my prices don't go down, which saves me a lot of trouble in inventing lies and blowing my own trumpet, or in turning my studio into a curiosity shop, and being civil to a parcel of Philistines."

"Yes," said Bland, "you're quite right, Melchisedek is bound to look after you: he buys you at a fair price like a vintage port, and then he lays you down, so to say; and your works 'll command a fabulous price, my boy, as soon as

you're dead, because Melchisedek is getting ready his "corner"; and when you come to the hammer at Christie's, as we all do now and again, he'll run you up, and see you are properly appreciated: and it's worth his while to do it for any man who has been a long time before the public, who doesn't over-produce, and of whose special vintage he has, so to say, a good stock matured in bottle. Eh, Jack?"



"It's his business, not mine," replied Milner a little gloomily, as he lighted his pipe. "No man as yet has succeeded in fathoming the dealers: there is as much mischief in any one of them as in a sackful of monkeys."

"My belief," remarked Bland, as he still stared appreciatively at his friend's rendering of *The Miller's Daughter*, "is that, though they pretend to hate each other, they are really in partnership, that they form a sort of syndicate, you know; that they are like the men at the 'knock-outs,' and in some mysterious way play into each other's hands. Where did you get the face from, Jack?" asked Mr. William Bland, after a pause.

"Ah," said Milner, with a smile, "I knew you'd come to that in the end. I had meant that little girl to be my own particular private property: but there are circumstances which make me wish that she should not come here any more."

"Not sit to you any more!" cried Bland. "But why, in the name of goodness?"

"Well, to tell you the truth, Bland, because I am very fond of that little girl; partly because the child's a lady, and partly because her mother's a friend of my cousin Adelaide. You remember Adelaide, the girl that married Barker the doctor?"

"Of course I remember her. Didn't I do the face of my Cassandra from her? Of course I remember her," cried Mr. Bland enthusiastically, and he kissed his fingers in the air.

"You needn't do that, Bland," said his friend, "Cassandra's an old woman now. But the real reason I don't want little Miss Fane to come here again is, that I don't want her to be made unhappy. I can see perfectly well that the child is fond of young Croft; he's a nice boy and a good-looking boy; a boy that any girl might very easily grow fond of: and he's an honest boy, and he hasn't the slightest idea that the child is getting fond of him. And out of sight is out of mind, Bland; and that's why I don't want little Miss Fane to come here any more."

"Perhaps you fancy things, Jack," said Mr. Bland with a smile.

"I wasn't sure till this morning," replied Milner; "but this morning my suspicions were turned into certainties. When the child heard of Walter's engagement to Mrs. Dacre, to-day, for the first time, she

betrayed herself. It'll be a great thing for her if she sits to you: she has to get her living you know, poor child; and you'll make her the fashion, Bland, by giving her beauty the hall-mark of your approbation; and if she becomes sufficiently the fashion, perhaps she'll marry well. Anyhow she's a good little girl, and an innocent little girl, and I know that you'll look after her for my sake—and for Cassandra's, eh, Bland? Ah," continued Milner with a laugh, "there was a time when we both of us would have done a great deal for Cassandra's sake. There, that's her address," said John Milner, as he scribbled something on a piece of paper and handed it to his friend.

"Calthorpe Street, Calthorpe Street, where's Calthorpe Street? I never heard of Calthorpe Street," exclaimed Bland.

"Calthorpe Street, my boy," said Milner with a smile, "is situated on the extreme border-land of respectability on the eastern frontier of Mesopotamia, close to the House of Correction and contiguous to Cow Cross; it isn't a cheerful neighbourhood."

Then the two men dismissed little Miss Fane from their minds, and began to chat about their work, and the work of their friends, their rivals, and their enemies—for even artists have enemies, though you mightn't think it. And Bland, as Milner went on working at *The Miller's Daughter*, absently turned over the sketches which lay in an open portfolio, taking advantage of the license always accorded by a brother artist.

"That's a pretty bit," said Bland, taking up a sketch and holding it at arm's length. "I like your sky, my boy, and I like the sleepy air of that solemn old place: it's just the sort of house where they're bound to own an ancestral ghost; probably the ghost of some fair lady who drowned herself in the drowsy little river. I'm fond of a sketch in oils—the real sketch in oils, I mean, such as this is, and not the sham one."

"It's odd that you should have pitched upon that particular sketch," said Milner. "Why, that's the very place where my little model, Phillida Fane, was born and bred; that's Fane's Court, and it has belonged to her family time out of mind; and when little Phillida saw it, she clapped her hands and cried, 'Oh, Mr. Milner, why that's our home; that's where mother and I used to live before we came to

London; that's the dear old Court, which has gone from us for ever now,' and then the child broke down."

"It's a pretty place," said William Bland, R.A.

CHAPTER X.

AT "THE HAY-CART."

"I'm very glad you ordered dinner, Boss. 'The Hay-cart' is very picturesque, but I fancy that eggs and bacon would be it's limit; not that under the present circumstances I should despise eggs and bacon, for I am as hungry as a hunter, and the sun *was* hot, there's no doubt about that, and, to tell you the truth, I ache all over."

"I think you'll be agreeably disappointed with 'The Hay-cart,' Master Walter; the place is something more than a mere roadside public-house, as you'll find out very shortly, and as for Mrs. Skeel, she's a woman with a history. Five-and-thirty years ago, Mrs. Skeel was the belle of Bullacewood village, she was the toast of the neighbourhood, and nobody admired her more than Lord Bullacewood's son and heir. If pretty Rose Marsden had been a designing girl, and had only taken the trouble to set her cap at young Lord Drupe, he would have been quite capable of marrying her. But Rose Marsden had so many admirers, that she didn't trouble her head about marrying; she knew that she had only got to hold up her pretty finger and say snip, and half the good-looking young fellows in the neighbourhood would be only too glad to cry snap, and make a match of it. So, feeling that she had only to throw the handkerchief, Rose Marsden was content to possess her soul in patience. And when young Lord Drupe sent her an eight-page love letter stuffed full of poetry—there was always a good deal of poetry in the love letters of thirty years ago—she felt very much

flattered, but she handed the letter to her mother all the same; and Goody Marsden went over to the great house in the morning and laid the letter before his lordship's papa. Lord Bullacewood was very angry indeed, and, to avoid unpleasant complications, he incontinently sent away his son in charge of a tutor to make the grand-tour. When he had got rid of his too impressionable son, he sent for Goody Marsden, and he told her that, having the welfare of all his tenants at heart, he thought that the sooner pretty Rose Marsden got married, the better. The old woman immediately communicated his

lordship's orders to her daughter. Though Rose Marsden was a dutiful girl, and though, as she knew, she had but to throw the handkerchief, and though she was ready to do almost anything for his lordship, yet she didn't quite see her way to oblige him in the present matter; because, you see, Rose Marsden was in love, and the gentleman whom Miss Marsden honoured with her affections was the village ne'er-do-weel. Tom Skeel was the best-looking young man in Bullacewood village; he stood six feet two in his stockings, and he either had thrashed,

or was ready to thrash, all the able bodied young men within a circle of ten miles: but he had no visible means of support. His father had been a tradesman in the village, and his natural pride wouldn't let Tom go out as a labourer. He had received a decent education at the Grammar School; he sang bass in the village choir; and on high days and holidays, when the joy bells were rung in the old village church, he led the ringers; but his vocal and instrumental performances did not bring him in any income. Young Lord Drupe was not cured of his folly; absence merely made his noble heart grow fonder: he wrote a most dutiful letter to his father, in which he

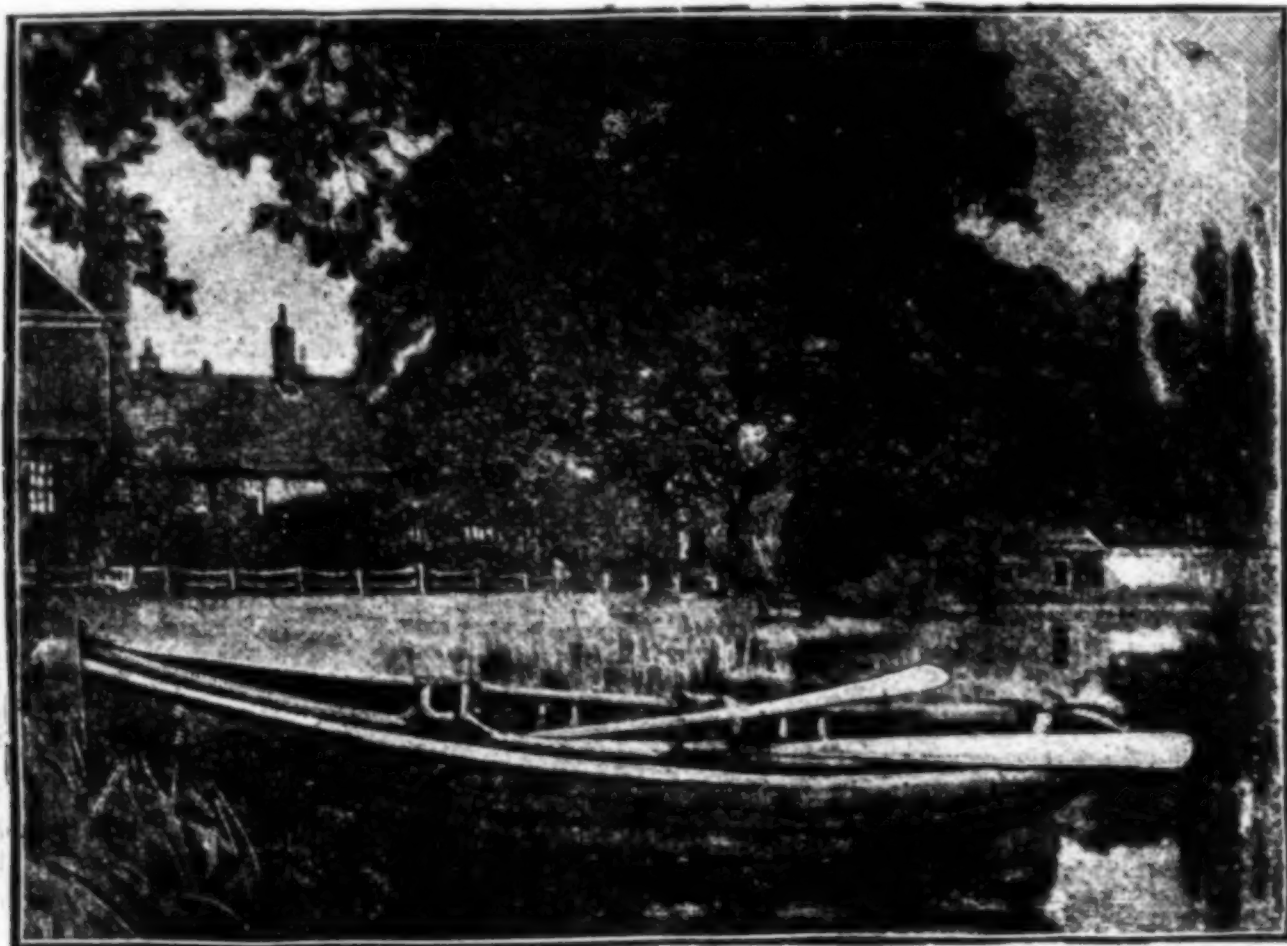


"OLD SKEEL."

informed him that, on his coming of age he should return to Bullacewood and marry Miss Marsden. And Rose's mother explained to his lordship's papa that, though her daughter didn't want to become Lady Drupe, yet that she declined to marry anybody owing to the fascinations of the athletic, but impecunious, Thomas Skeel. And then Lord Bullacewood gave Rose Marsden a long lease of 'The Hay-cart' at a nominal rent, and he insisted on her making Mr. Thomas Skeel happy at once. So Tom Skeel and his sweetheart were married; and the pair stuck to business, and did well at 'The Hay-cart.' When Lord Bullacewood died he actually left Mr. Skeel and his wife a legacy of a great

"I can answer for mine, Skeel," he said. "And as for my pupil's—this is my pupil, Mr. Croft," he added, indicating Walter—"his age will guarantee *his* appetite."

Mr. Skeel instantly shook hands with Walter, remarking that "the mistress will be main glad to hear that 'ee have brought right down good 'uns, for she thinks, does Rose, that they that takes a second helping pay the best compliments to her that cooks. Lor' bless ye, we've had 'em send down several messages and such like, and drink her health; but it's the quantity they eat that Rose looks at. Says Rose, that's the fittest testimonial to her that cooks. My Rose's cooking is good enough for most people, Muster Milner."



LULLINGSTON.

many dozens of very fine port: they have still got some of it left. So 'The Hay-cart,' as you see, isn't an ordinary public-house: they'll give us a capital dinner, which Mrs. Skeel will cook for us herself, and I dare say we can get a bottle of his wonderful port out of the landlord."

By this time they had reached "The Hay-cart," and in the doorway stood Mr. Skeel, the landlord, a smile of welcome on his face. It was an aristocratic face, and you could see that, in his youth, the man had been very handsome.

"Evenin', Muster Milner," said the landlord, holding out his hand; "have 'ee brought it with 'ee, sir, and have the young gentleman brought his'n?"

Milner shook hands with Mr. Skeel.

The two artists sat down to a capital dinner. There was a duckling, with green peas; there was a steak, tender as butter, with big, floury potatoes; then there was a junket with a dash of rum in it, and it isn't only in Devonshire that they know how to make junkets. And both Milner and Walter did full justice to Mrs. Skeel's capital cooking; and Mr. Thomas Skeel waited upon them himself, and occasionally condescended to join in the conversation.

Then Milner and his pupil began to compare notes upon the day's work.

"That was a capital bit at Lullingston," said Walter, "and the boat was an honest little tub. I shouldn't mind owning an old place like that."

'Happy the man whose only care,
A few paternal acres bound.'

But I suppose there's a greater charm in inheriting such a place than in buying it."

"Well, at all events, you get it for nothing," replied Milner, "and that's a consideration."

"But it *was* hot all the same, Boss; and I *was* hungry when we got to that little islet in the river at Franks, and I wasn't sorry to go to sleep for half an hour under the willows: the place was a regular lotus-eater's paradise; it is a pretty bit," said Walter, as he held his sketch at arm's length, and gazed at it lovingly.

"Yes," said Milner; "it's hardly worth

cried the young man, "but the view from the window here is a genuine English bit. Why, just look at those rosy apples which seem to cry, 'come and eat us.' Our landscapes are right enough, where we fail is in the costumes; there's nothing romantic about the costume of the British peasant."

"No," said Milner, "that is changed for the worse: the smock-frocked villager is disappearing fast; the labourer nowadays is dressed in second-hand tweed, and his presence spoils the English landscape."

"It would be very difficult to spoil *that*," said Walter, nodding towards the view from the window. "I got a lot of figures at the lock before you arrived yesterday;



ISLET AT FRANKS.

while going abroad for subjects when one gets the wonderful greens that are to be found in an English landscape: it makes one feel one's impotence when one tries to hold the mirror up to nature in a scene like that."

"Yes, it's beyond me," cried the younger man: "and I felt quite angry with you, Boss, when you set me to do that old kitchen yesterday, and try a sort of Dutch interior; I took your proposition as a Dutch compliment; but my Dutch interior more than satisfies me."

"It isn't bad for a youngster," said Milner, examining the drawing critically; "it is very Dutch," he added with a smile.

"You may say what you like, Boss,"

and the old fellow's daughter must have thought I was smitten, I did so many of her. By the way, Boss," asked Walter, "what's become of that little Miss Fane, who used to sit to us? I think I should like to do something from her. I couldn't help admiring the little girl."

"Bah," replied Milner testily; "why should you try to turn her head? Leave her alone, boy. If she runs straight, as I think she will, she'll make some honest fellow happy. Let her alone, no good can come of it."

"Good heavens! Boss, you don't think I'd hurt her, do you? A fellow must be indeed a coward to want to hurt a little girl like that. There's something very

sympathetic about that little girl, and she's so fresh and innocent."

"That's a drawback that will soon wear off," replied John Milner, "she'll lose it with the youthful bloom of her girlish beauty, they all do."

"I don't see why a girl shouldn't retain her innocence all her life."

"She'd be all the happier if she could," replied Milner.

"Yes, I suppose she would," said the younger man wearily.

"You'd better ring the bell, Walter, and we'll have old Tom Skeel up, and ask him for a bottle of his port."

Walter did as he was bid, and Mr. Skeel, in his shirt sleeves, answered the summons.

There are some men who pass the greater portion of their lives in their shirt sleeves; old Tom Skeel was one of these.

But he had far too great a respect for Mr. Milner, the artist, to reappear in his shirt sleeves as that gentleman's guest; when he returned, a decanter in one hand and a dusty cobwebbed bottle in the other, he had his black Sunday coat on.

Then he decanted the wine with reverent care.

"There's a crust, sur," he said proudly, holding the empty bottle to the light. "I do confess, sur," he said, "that it has lost its colour a bit; but it's mighty generous tippie," said the old man, as he smacked his lips. "I wish I could afford to put a bottle of it under my belt every day of my life; it's running low, Mister Milner, but I mean that bin of wine to last my lifetime, I do, and you may believe me, sur, that I wouldn't bring it out for everybody, no, not if they was to go down on their bended marrow-bones. I don't believe in the castin' of pearls, sur, savin' your presence. But *you* know a good glass of wine, sur, and you've been a good friend to Rose and me this many a year."

"Let's drink Mrs. Skeel's health," said Milner.

Mr. Skeel rose and drank his wife's health; then he placed his glass upon the table and reseated himself.

"When I drink my Missus's health," said the landlord, "I always drink it standing, gentlemen, and I'll tell yer for why. If my Rose had thought fit she might have been 'my lady,' and it 'ud have been your ladyship here and your ladyship there all her life. But Rose was that fond of me, sur, that she ups and says to his

young lordship, 'I've been walkin' out with Tom Skeel unbeknown to mother, and I dursn't, my lord; and if I *was* to, and Tom was to get to hear of it, there's no sayin' what he'd do, bein' that masterful.' And she told me afterwards, did Rose," added Mr. Skeel confidentially, "that she was afraid if I got right down angry and heard tales, that I'd have just wrung his young lordship's neck, and then it 'ud have been a hanging matter. Ah, Rose was downright fond of me; there was a mort of girls fond of me when I was a young chap, but I don't believe that one of them was that fond of me that Rose was, and would have given up what she gave up for my sake. There's very few wenches that 'ud refuse to marry a young lord, for the sake of keeping a public-house with the man they love."

"She's been a good wife to you, Skeel," said Milner.

"That she has, Mister Milner, and the business wouldn't be what it is but for Rose. Why, she was that pretty when she was a girl that folks used to come to 'The Hay-cart' for miles, just to look at her; there was no railway in these parts you see, sur, then, and chaps used to make a sort of jaunt of it. Now things are changed, and when a young fellow wants to take a holiday, he just runs up to London and sees the waxworks. And the Tap isn't what it was. What with the Blue-ribbonists and Salvationists, and education, which has done the public more harm than even the other two, business isn't so brisk as it used to be. But artists, they stick to 'The Hay-cart,' sur, and there are real tip-toppers, sur, such as you are yourself, Mr. Milner, if I may make so bold, who come down here year after year, for a day or two, and make things lively; and we do our best to make them comfortable, sur, and they say a good word for us to their friends. And this, that was once just a little village public, has come to be a sort of hotel in a humble way. And I've had good offers for this business, and folks have asked me why I don't pull it down and build it up again; but we're old-fashioned people, sur, and it'll last our time."

And then the bottle of port having come to an end, Milner bade the landlord good-night, and lighted his pipe; as for Walter, what with the sun and the air, and the rowing, and the couple of glasses of very special port that he had drunk, I

blush to say that though, technically speaking, he was a hero, and though heroes upon the stage never sit down, and heroes in novels, as a rule, never go to sleep, yet Walter Croft, when old Skeel took his leave, was soundly off in his easy chair.

CHAPTER XI.

MEDICINE FOR WALTER.

Walter heard the news in Mr. Wilbraham's office, whither he had been summoned by telegram. When there's bad news to tell, people always telegraph; not that Mr. Wilbraham telegraphed his

time; it had, we understand, been staved off by opportune assistance from relatives."

Now Walter Croft didn't read his *Times*; he received Mr. Wilbraham's telegram, which caused him some astonishment; he yawned, he looked upon having to journey to Lincoln's Inn Fields as an unmitigated nuisance, and then he proceeded to do as he was bid. When Walter walked into Mr. Wilbraham's outer office, it rather surprised him to find that he was not received by the clerks with that deferential awe which it had previously been his privilege to inspire. In



MR. SKEEL ROSE AND DRANK HIS WIFE'S HEALTH.

bad news, but he "summoned" Walter to wait upon him. Now if Walter Croft had suddenly come into a fortune, no doubt Mr. Wilbraham would have "waited upon" his client with the good news; as it was, Mr. Wilbraham requested Walter to "attend." If Walter had been in the habit of reading his *Times*, he would have seen in the City intelligence the following little paragraph:—

"Yesterday, being settling day, Mr. Whitechurch, of Craig's Court, was 'hammered,' having failed to meet his engagements. It is not a very heavy failure, but it is one that has been expected for some

the first place all the three clerks turned round to inspect him, and the senior, who was cleaning his nails with a penknife (when lawyers' clerks are not writing they are always cleaning their nails with penknives; it is a curious fact in natural history, a sort of sharpening of the claws; cats do it and tigers do it, in fact all the great carnivora), didn't rush forward to offer him a chair as was his ordinary custom, but merely remarked, "Mr. Wilbraham will see you in a few minutes, sir; he is expecting you." When Walter was at length ushered into Mr. Wilbraham's presence, he noticed that the old gentle-

man's demeanour, instead of being simply bland, was blandly affectionate; in fact, he addressed Walter as his dear young friend, a thing which he had never done before.

"You have heard of it, I suppose, my dear young friend," said Mr. Wilbraham, revolving slowly on his pedestal chair and confronting Walter.

"Heard of what, sir?" replied Walter; "I haven't heard of anything particular."

"He hasn't heard of it? Then I've got to break it to him, which is peculiarly unpleasant. I wish I had done it by letter." This was said in a sort of stage whisper, which was perfectly audible to Walter. "Your guardian, Whitechurch," said Mr. Wilbraham in a slightly louder tone, "has, I regret to say, absconded, Mr. Croft. By this morning's mail I received a letter from him, dated Paris, in which he tells me that—er—" here the stage whisper came in again, "I'd better have it out and get it over, I suppose." "In fact, my dear young friend," he continued, in his ordinary tone, "he intimates that—er—he has feloniously appropriated your entire fortune, my dear young friend."

Walter Croft turned pale, as well he might. "But I thought it was all what you call tied up, sir," he said.

"It was all most suitably invested, if you mean that," replied Mr. Wilbraham. "Poor young fellow, he evidently hasn't the slightest idea of business," added Mr. Wilbraham, as usual thinking aloud. "But you know your guardian was your sole trustee, and the money, unfortunately, stood in his name; and I regret to tell you that I have ascertained this morning, that every farthing of it has been sold out, there's a man in possession at Kensington Park Gardens, and from what the man Whitechurch says, the infernal scoundrel, I have no reason to doubt that every farthing of your property has disappeared. These city gentlemen don't, as a rule, do things by halves."

"You mean then, sir, that I am utterly ruined."

"I fear that is so, my dear young friend," replied Mr. Wilbraham. "He doesn't realise it," he continued in the audible stage whisper; "I'm uncommonly glad he doesn't."

"But I'm afraid I do realise it, sir," said Walter.

"Strange that you should make that remark," said Mr. Wilbraham. "I'm glad you take it so coolly; but it's no use

crying over spilled milk, is it? Anyhow you've got a profession, and that's something."

"Yes, it's something, Mr. Wilbraham," replied Walter, "but I'm afraid it isn't much."

"Well, you know, it was your own doing," said Mr. Wilbraham, "you would insist on being an artist."

"I felt it was the only thing I was fit for," replied the young fellow bitterly.

"Well, things might be worse, you know," said the lawyer. "You've no debts, I trust, Mr. Croft, and no entanglement of any sort?"

"No, I don't owe anything," replied Walter; "though as to entanglement," he added with a smile, "the fact is, I'm engaged to be married."

"Dear me," remarked Mr. Wilbraham, "that's *very* unfortunate. May I ask, is the lady possessed of means?"

"To tell you the truth, Mr. Wilbraham, I never thought about that. She lives in a good house, and keeps her carriage."

"Then if I were you, my dear young friend," said Mr. Wilbraham, "I should keep my tongue between my teeth."

"Good heavens! sir," replied Walter indignantly, "surely that would be most dishonourable."

"Ah, that's another question altogether," replied Mr. Wilbraham. "In this room we are not concerned about points of honour; prudential considerations alone influence us here: on points of honour, Mr. Croft, every man must be his own Mentor."

"I'm with you there, sir," said Walter, "and we won't discuss the point of honour, Mr. Wilbraham. Do you think anything will be rescued from the wreck?"

"You've taken the bad news so sensibly, my dear young friend, that I will be plain with you," said Mr. Wilbraham, rising and holding out his hand to terminate the interview. "The ship has foundered as it were in mid-ocean, Mr. Croft, so there is no wreck, and consequently no salvage. I may be wrong, my dear young friend, but that is how I must at present advise. Good morning, my dear young friend. I fancy the best thing you could do, would be to go and enlist," he added in his audible whisper.

Then the two men shook hands, and Walter walked out of the lawyer's office and down the big stone staircase; and then he stepped into his hansom, and told

the smart young man who drove it to go to Lexham Gardens. "So the old fellow considered I was only good for food for powder," thought the young man; "perhaps he was right. They say that it does a fellow good to have the nonsense knocked out of him; I shall have it knocked out of me with a vengeance now; and the world will show me just as much mercy as the chimney-sweep does to the carpet that he beats; but the carpet is all the better for the beating, after all—though that's cold comfort. Let me see; I don't suppose I shall get more than a hundred clear for my rattle-traps; it's the end of the season, and things go very cheap under the hammer then. Watch and chain and limited jewellery, say another fifty. It's all I've got in the world, and it isn't much. Stay, there's 'The Miller's Daughter,' that's nearly finished. I wonder whether I could sell 'The Miller's Daughter?' I must try to. I wonder what Cissy 'll say when she hears my news? It'll be a heavy blow to her, for she's a woman of expensive tastes; and I suppose"—and then he sighed—"I suppose we shall have to wait; for I couldn't—no, hang it!—I couldn't marry Cissy, to be her pensioner. But if things do go well with me, and I do make my mark, why then, perhaps, we mightn't have so very long to wait after all." And then gradually the young fellow, as he thought of the woman he loved, forgot his money troubles, and when his cab drew up at Mrs. Dacre's door in Lexham Gardens, he felt better. "Now," thought the young fellow, "I shall lunch with Cissy, and we shall probably go for a drive afterwards."

Mrs. Dacre didn't keep him waiting long. As she entered the room, a tender smile upon her pretty lips, she held out both her hands in welcome; and when he took them, her lover kissed her as a matter of course, but he spoke no word.

"Walter," she said, looking at him in astonishment, "Walter, dear, what's the matter? Something's the matter, I know, or you wouldn't look like that. What is it, Walter? Sit down and tell me, dear, at once. You're not ill, Walter, are you? You're looking pale, and I felt your hand tremble, and it was as cold as ice. Don't let there be any secrets between us two, Walter dear," she said.

"I never shall have any secrets from you, Cissy," replied the young fellow sadly, as he dropped into a low chair opposite Mrs. Dacre. "It's just because

I can't have any secrets from you that I have come to be the bearer of bad news. It's bad and bitter news I have to tell."

"Has your guardian found us out, Walter? Is he raising objections?" cried Mrs. Dacre anxiously. "We mustn't let your guardian come between us, Walter."

"He has come between us with a vengeance, Cissy; he has taken every farthing I had in the world and gambled it away; and he's bolted, and—and I'm a ruined man, a beggar, Cissy."

"What!" shrieked young Mrs. Dacre; "ruined? Utterly, irretrievably ruined?"

"So Wilbraham my lawyer says."

Mrs. Dacre had risen from the sofa on which she had been sitting, and her face was blanched as though by sudden fear.

"You're not trifling with me, Walter? You're not trifling with me to try me? You couldn't be so cruel as that, Walter Croft?"

Then Walter told his miserable tale. When he had finished, Mrs. Dacre, who had somewhat regained her calmness, said magisterially, "Your guardian is an abominable villain, Walter."

"I suppose he is," said the young man blankly; "but you have no comfort to give me, Cissy? I came to you for comfort," he moaned, raising his eyes to her appealingly.

"You're better off than I am, Walter," she said. "You're young and strong, and you've the world before you; while I, having played my cards badly, am ruined utterly. Give me time to think a minute," she said, "give me time, Walter, give me time." And then she sat silent for a moment or two, her hands clutched tightly together upon her lap, staring at vacancy, as though she were endeavouring to gaze into the far distant future. And as Walter watched her in astonishment, his heart died within him. The woman he loved with his honest boy's heart had offered him no crumb of comfort, had shown no sympathy for his misfortune; and he felt as though an invisible, but utterly impassable, barrier had suddenly sprung up between them.

"Cissy," he said imploringly, breaking the silence, "Cissy, won't you wait for me? Won't you give me a chance, Cissy?" he wailed out. "If you'll only wait for me, dear, I may be able to make my mark; and if I fail, and our marriage should become impossible, it won't be my fault."

"Walter," she answered, and her voice

was strangely altered, sounding in his ears hard and unmusical, "I can't afford to wait. Had things gone well with you, Walter, I would have gladly married you,

necessities. When I sold myself, as a mere girl, to Mr. Dacre, I did it deliberately and with my father's approval," she added bitterly; "then, the possession of money



WALTER CROFT'S SKETCH OF THE GIRL AT THE LOCK. (PAGE 201.)

and done my best to make you happy; but I'm not fitted, Mr. Croft, to be a poor man's wife. To a woman like me, excitement, luxury, and the pleasures that money can buy, are not mere pleasures; they are

having become a necessity of my existence I laid myself out to captivate a victim, for I had been the victim in that loveless match of mine. Then I met you, and I honestly liked you; you may not believe

me, Walter," she said, "but it's true, I did like you; I like you still; I have never liked anyone so well as I have liked you, Mr. Croft; but I have never loved you. Women of my class—women who sell themselves for money—do not know what love is. I sold myself to escape from a miserable and sordid home; in my first crime there were extenuating circumstances; in my second there are none. You are a ruined man, while I am but a penniless adventuress, a heartless gambler who has played her last stake, and lost it. Women, such as I am, have no shame; I have no shame in standing here and telling the honest boy who loved me for myself, that he has wasted the treasure of his youthful love on one who is unworthy; and I tell the truth, simply because the game's played out, and I have lost it, through no fault of mine."

"Cissy," said Walter, rising to his feet excitedly, "you must be mad; you only say these dreadful things to rid yourself of me at once and for ever. Tell me, is there somebody else?"

Mrs. Dacre laughed a little, low, musical laugh, as she reseated herself.

"No, my poor boy, there's no one else," she said; and then the poor fellow suddenly appreciated the difference in their ages for the first time. "It's far better for you that you should know me as I really am," said Mrs. Dacre. "I've tried to be honest with you, as far as in me lies, for once, and I've told you the truth, Walter, now; because sooner or later it would have to be told. I don't ask you to remain my friend, Mr. Croft, because women like me have no friends: I don't ask you not to despise me, for that's impossible. But when you are happy, and I trust you may be happy some day, then, if you still remember me, think of me with pity, Mr. Croft, as of that most miserable of all women—the wretch who cannot afford the luxury of a heart. Go!" she said. "After what I have told you, there can be no need of further words between us two."

He would have spoken, but she waved him off. Then he left the place in silence, as he was bidden, letting himself out of the house without a word.

Then a very strange thing happened. Mrs. Dacre buried her face in her hands and shed blinding tears of genuine sorrow.

That is what happened, it did indeed; but it is quite impossible to explain,

except perhaps by the simple truth that Mrs. Dacre was only a woman after all.

Walter Croft tramped along mechanically, and for a full twenty minutes he was practically unaware of what he was doing. A small boy indignantly told him to "mind where he was a-coming to," and the driver of a hansom cab, who happened to be in a hurry, had considerably refrained from running over him, simply because he saw that Walter had a decent coat to his back, and was evidently a habitual patron of the London gondolier. Then it suddenly dawned upon young Croft that he was in Kensington Gardens: there was plenty of air, there was shade, the place was not thronged; for perambulator-wheeling Venus and her charges had gone home to the nursery dinner; and Mars, of the scarlet tunic and the shapeless boots, had hurried back to Knightsbridge barracks, to swallow, with what appetite he might, the regulation number of ounces of government beef, without bone, with which he is provided by a grateful country. When Walter awoke to the fact that he was in Kensington Gardens, he flung himself down upon the nearest bench. Had he been a pipe smoker, he would assuredly have taken refuge in tobacco, and so have got rid of a portion at least of his dull load of carking care; but Walter only smoked cigarettes, and as befitted a young gentleman of means, they were of course of the finest Dubecq tobacco, and purchased at the right shop, at a fabulous price, from a Greek purveyor with an unpronounceable name; and, as wise people know, there's little or no consolation in a cigarette. So Walter lay back upon the seat, and, staring at the gravel path in front of him, began to turn things over in his mind. Mrs. Dacre had been the boy's first love; he had admired her, and she had fascinated him. What chance had a young fellow of twenty, which was his age when he first made her acquaintance, against a young society widow who had marked him down as lawful prize? There is this peculiarity about a first love to a very young man: whatever the beloved object does is right; even her faults are only so many additional charms: very young men have been known to admire even the grammatical errors and vulgarities of a *Dulcinea*, looking upon them as a sort of spice to the dainty dish, which gives a peculiar zest and piquancy to her society. Mrs. Dacre

dressed very well ; the result was that, in Walter Croft's eyes, all simply clad girls were but as homely dowdies. Then again he had always seen the picture of Mrs. Dacre in an appropriate frame, either in her charming bijou residence in Lexham Gardens, or in society ; and, as we all know, the frame makes an immense difference to any picture. Everybody in this world carries about a fetish of some sort, something which he can bow down to and worship, and offer sacrifices to, and above all things, believe and trust in. Walter's particular fetish had been his love for Mrs. Dacre, and now it was taken from him, and he knew that she was but a false goddess—a mere valueless little Brummagem idol. It had been a great thing for the young fellow to feel that he had been loved for himself alone, he had been very proud of it : and now he had heard from her own lips that she had never more than liked him, and he felt that she had looked upon their engagement merely as time lost, and time wasted. He, who had ever looked upon her as something more than human, as something only a little lower than the angels : he, who had

"Vowed her the one thing undefiled
That lived and breathed in this world of sin ;
The purest, tenderest, truest child
That a man ever trusted in,"

had now heard from her own lips that she was but an ordinary heartless little society schemer after all. As yet he couldn't reconcile himself to the idea of this, simply because he was ruined ; that didn't trouble him so much, that seemed a matter of very secondary importance ; at one-and-twenty one doesn't trouble one's self very much about money—if one is worth one's salt.

Walter Croft must have sat on the bench, engaged in eating his leek, for well-nigh half an hour, before he became aware of the presence of Lazarus. The fact was, that when Walter sat down at one end of the bench, Lazarus had been fast asleep at the other ; and it was only when he woke up and began to stretch himself and yawn loudly that Walter became aware of his propinquity. Lazarus was not a person of prepossessing appearance ; the first im-

pression he gave Walter was, that he had robbed a scarecrow ; his shoes were burst, his knees peered out from rents in his trousers, and they weren't comfortable knees, their osteology was a great deal too manifest. Lazarus wore a long, black frock coat, which was buttoned to the throat for obvious reasons. On his chin and upper lip were the bristles of a week's growth ; it is a very curious thing, but your British beggar never grows his hair ; if he has a halfpenny to spare which he doesn't want to spend on drink or food, it's a moral certainty that he gets shaved with that halfpenny. The costume of the beggar was completed by a tall hat of dismal appearance ; it wasn't a glossy black as tall hats should be ; it was a dismal brown, the colour of a badly dyed hearse-horse. The beggar yawned so long and so loudly, that Walter almost forgot his woes and felt inclined to yawn too, for there is nothing so acutely infectious as yawning—unless, perchance, it be the mumps. The beggar eyed Walter scrutinisingly, he took his measure, so to say, then he addressed him in a whining tone.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he began. "I should not presume to speak to an utter stranger in a public place, were I not impelled to it by the cravings of hunger. The mendicity laws are rigorously enforced in this country, sir, and I would scorn to beg. But, while apologising for addressing you without a proper introduction, might I enquire if you are in a position to provide a scholar and a gentleman with a temporary loan ?"

He had hardly got the words out of his mouth when a policeman appeared upon the scene. Then Lazarus suddenly lowered his voice to a confidential whisper.

"You'll excuse me, sir," he said, "but we are not alone ; I perceive one of the guardians of the public peace approaching. The weather," he continued, in a louder voice, "is everything that could be desired ; as you were remarking just now, sir, it is a very beautiful day ; it's the sort of weather that makes one feel grateful that one's not a constable on duty, and therefore unable to sit down."

(To be continued).

The Rent Veil of the Harim Slave.

By CHARLES J. MANSFORD, B.A.

CHAPTER I.

IT was the festival of *Khuda Yol*, or God's Road, and the bazaars of Khiva were crowded with a gaily-coloured throng gathered there—the sellers for business, the buyers for pleasure. A wonderful babel it seemed to be; sometimes the harsh voices of the barterers grew shrill and fierce, as they discussed the value of one of the pieces of finery there displayed; at other times the sound of their accents were hushed, as a sirdar or chief passed among them; as they gazed at the feats of a juggler, or even listened to the rhythmic melody poured into their ears by a barshi or musician.

Yet, to the eyes of Edward Danton, an English visitor, the most impressive scene of all was the bazaar before which a few Turkomans were gathered, as they gazed listlessly at the strange wares displayed for sale there, or exchanged idle comments which were by no means flattering to the objects which attracted their attention—for the wares were human!

A group of miserable-looking captives those formed who were waiting to be purchased, most of them being Persians, although mingled with them were a few whose features plainly revealed to the traveller that they had been brought from Russia.

To the true Kirghis or Kasak both Russia and Persia apparently formed at that time equally happy hunting grounds from which the results of the chase might be carried safely to the Khivan slave mart. So much indeed did the provinces of Seistan and Khorassan suffer from these lawless invaders, and so successful were their raids, that the contempt of the Kasak for the despised Sheah was matter of common knowledge, and even in these days little change is apparent, for slavery is by no means abandoned there.

The men who stood captive were

secured by stout iron collars, a chain being thence passed to a heavy block—a treatment which was only a little less rigorous in the method by which the women were fettered. On that day slaves were surely cheap enough, for by listening to the conversation of those around him, it transpired to the Englishman that a sum of less than five pounds would have brought into his possession the finest of the male slaves before him.

Turning away disconcerted at such a sight, Danton's eyes fell upon a gaily-turbaned, swarthy-looking man, who at first appeared to be washing his face, chest and arms, with sand in lieu of water. The

man caught the stranger's glance fixed upon him, and, looking up from the mat upon



A GROUP OF MISERABLE-LOOKING CAPTIVES.

which he sat cross-legged, he asked in Turkish:

"Will the Feringhee have his fortune told?"

Danton gazed down at his interrogator. The man's arms were bared to the elbow, and before him was placed a little flattened heap of sand, upon which a number of marks were scored. The fortune-teller held out as he spoke three wisps of hay,

which he invited the Englishman to place on the lines marked in the sand—that being the method adopted to bring forth a supposed revelation of the future.

Glancing with an amused air at the fortune-teller the Englishman, after hesitating for a minute, accepted the offer, and having listened to the more than happy predictions which were made—mainly with a view to increase the hearer's liberality—he pointed to the slaves exposed for sale in the bazaar at hand, then remarked:

"A good fortune truly, well, there is your reward; is not mine a far happier future than is in store for these captives?"

"They who come from the far land which is called Feringhistan, deserve a better fate than the craven Sheahs do," replied the fortune-teller, as he eagerly clutched the coin before it scarcely reached the little heap of sand in front of him.

"That may be," continued Danton, "although I don't understand why it should. But come, I will give you a further sum if you will tell me a little of the history of any slave you have seen disposed of here. You undoubtedly know something about them, for as you sit near this bazaar from day to day, strange sights have befallen you."

He stopped, for the love of narration, which seems inborn in those of eastern nations, was plainly aroused in the man before him, even without the additional stimulus of the promised reward for doing so.

The fortune-teller looked keenly at his questioner, then, drawing with his forefinger some uncouth figure upon the sand before him, he asked:

"Feringhee, how thinkest thou that I occupy myself when no one seeks my aid?"

"I certainly have not the very slightest idea," responded Danton.



WILL THE FERINGHEE HAVE HIS FORTUNE TOLD?

"I sit and interpret each captive's future from the knowledge which I gain by questioning their captors of what may be known of their past."

"Ah!" exclaimed the Englishman: "It is, of course, easy to understand that you are wise and very learned in such matters; you will, I am sure, tell me something very interesting of a captive whom you have seen sold yonder."

Still gazing at the sand before

him, the fortune-teller went on tracing the figure which he had commenced. Looking at this carefully, Danton observed that it now presented the outline of a woman's head, apparently veiled. The man lowered the tone of his voice, as though wishful not to attract the attention of any of those around, and in order to hear him, Danton leant forward a little from the recumbent position which he had taken up. Chanting, rather than speaking, the fortune-teller told of a captive Persian woman, whose adventures at Khiva had been for some time the sole topic of conversation in the bazaars.

CHAPTER II.

"Fiercely the sunlight streamed down one morning," began the narrator, "and a white heat rose far round fair Khiva, and enveloped the city in its ghostlike mantle. Few indeed were about, for a strange hush had come over the bazaars under the influence of the sickly glare when, as I sat here, the haze before me seemed to become denser and denser still, and then, amid a cloud of dust, the trampling of horses' hoofs arose, as there dashed into the city a body of Kasaks, each of whom carried a captive swung before his saddle.

"As if by magic, the streets became thronged again, and even the keepers of

the bazaars came out to see what had transpired.

"A raid upon the Persian dogs!" cried the Kasaks: 'Who will buy these craven Sheahs?' and the horsemen dismounted, leading their captives towards the bazaars.

"It was of no avail that offers of barter for the captives were made to the Kasaks, for in slave dealing, money alone was acceptable to them. At last, out of the crowd which surrounded the prisoners, stepped the one whose bazaar is opposite, and he eventually purchased the whole batch of those so soon enslaved.

"In vain the latter begged for water to quench their thirst before being chained up for sale, since the Kasaks, with scorn-

unveil her face—an indignity rarely inflicted, even upon slaves.

"The keeper of the bazaar, who was vexed at her obstinacy—for he wished to dispose of the captives to the best advantage for himself—advanced towards her as if he would lay his hand upon her veil. She turned her head deftly aside, and avoided his grasp, just as the crowd before the bazaar parted to make way for some one of distinction who had arrived upon the scene. It was the Khan!

"Amid obsequious murmurs of '*Brom Meklah, Meklah Akber*' (praise be to Meklah, Meklah is great), the Khan, clad in resplendent attire as befitted his lofty station, moved towards the captive. A silence fell upon those before the bazaar,



A BODY OF KASAKS.

ful cries, turned their backs upon their captives, and departed with the money they had thus obtained, eager to plan some new foray. Nor was he of the bazaar more pitiful, for though his slaves reminded him of the proverb that 'a drop of water given to a thirsty man washes away the sins of a century,' he calmly replied to their entreaties, that this only referred to those smitten with thirst in the desert, and not to Sheah slaves exposed for sale in the bazaars of Khiva.

"Those who gathered round the bazaar to inspect the Persian slaves, found that most of them were males, the few females among them being veiled, in accordance with custom. One of them was so much concealed, that the gazers sought to learn who she might be. Expostulations, jeers, and taunts failed to get the woman to

as he demanded to know the cause of the excitement which had arisen. His eyes fell upon the captive as he did so, and then, hearing of her refusal to unveil, he responded:

"Thou art a bold slave to dare in captivity to refuse the command of thy owner. Knowest thou, that in this my dominion, thy race are reckoned at naught? Truly is it said that no Persian ever approached the Attreck save with a rope encircling the neck! Surely thou hast a spirit in thee at variance with thy race. Knowest thou me? I am the Khan!"

"The captive still held her hand protectingly before her veil as she answered:

"If thou art indeed the Khan, whose word is absolute, command that I be sent

back to Khorassan, whence I have been stolen.'

"Unveil thyself to me," said the despot in an imperative tone. 'I would fain see her to whom I am asked to grant this boon.'

"The woman seemed to raise her head haughtily as she responded:

"Never! The eyes of the Sunnite shall not gaze upon my face; alone and defenceless as I am, nevertheless I refuse to obey thee!"

"A fierce look crossed the face of the Khan, as he heard this defiant reply, and those in the crowd involuntarily drew back. It seemed dangerous, indeed, to be present when the despot was thus defied, and Meklah might be disposed to secure eternal silence from those who were unexpectedly the witnesses of his discomfiture. He turned to the keeper of the bazaar, and asked:

"What is thy price for this slave?"

"The man prostrated himself, then, rising, stroked his beard with his hand as he answered:

"I am the dust beneath thy feet, and all I have is thine; take thou the slave, and thy servant will ever praise Allah and the Prophet that thus thou hast honoured him."

"Meklah laughed scornfully as he flung some coins at the man's feet.

"The Khan takes nought that he does not purchase. Hast thou ever heard to the contrary?" he asked.

"The trembling bazaar keeper made haste to declare by the Koran that it was so recorded throughout the land of the Khan's equity.

"Send thou the slave to my harim," said Meklah. Then, leaning over his purchase as if he would glance through her thick veil, he muttered: 'Thou cat's-

paw of a sovereign, thy head shall anon be bent low enough, for thou shalt be the veriest drudge of the harim, as soon thou wilt discover.'

"Meklah turned away with a fierce smile upon his bearded face, and then passed on through the awe-struck crowd. When Meklah smiled so, the fates were weaving someone's shroud.

"Eager to do the Khan's bidding, the bazaar keeper hurried off the captive, who was shortly afterwards received into the harim, and then conducted to the women's apartment. Upon entering the anderoon, the woman was placed in charge of the queen of the harim, and she, with all the scorn of her race for a Siah, commanded the slave to unveil. No acquiescence was made to this order, and the queen, who had been joined by the Khan's second favourite, Mirah, stamped her foot with rage at being thus disobeyed.

"Thou shalt unveil at my bidding," she cried impetuously; 'thy face is surely plain enough; thou needst not fear that the Khan's favourite will be jealous of thee.'

"The ring of mockery in her tones gained nothing.

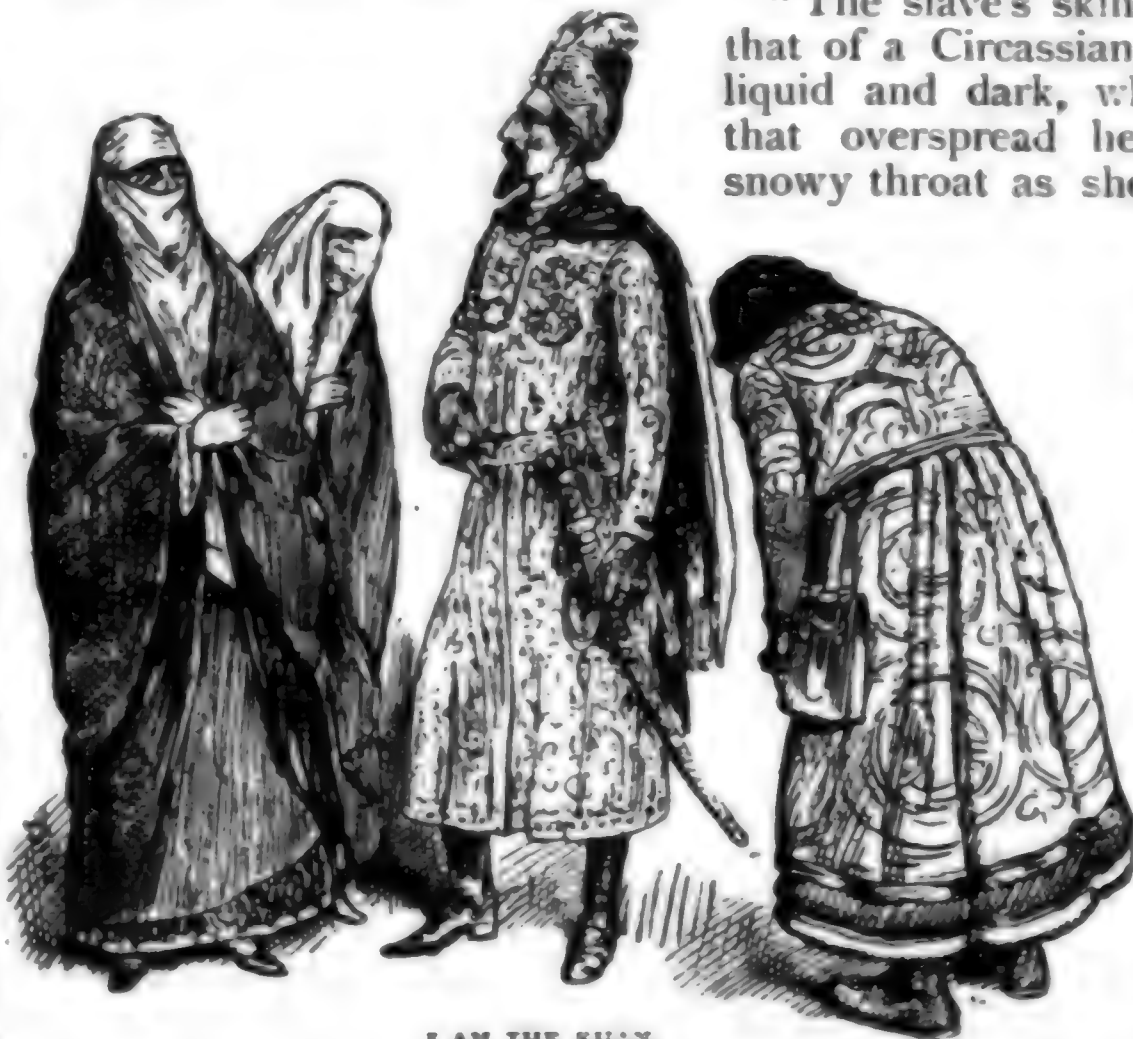
"I will not unveil in a Sunnite harim," the slave answered.

"The queen raised her hand, and grasping the veil, rent it asunder. As she did so, she started back in astonishment.

"Speak!" she cried; 'who art thou? Surely thou art not a Persian!'

"The slave's skin was as fair as that of a Circassian, her eyes were liquid and dark, while the blush that overspread her cheeks and snowy throat as she was thus assailed, heightened, if that were possible, the beauty of the newest purchase of the Khan.

"Know, then," answered the captive, 'that she whose veil thy hand has rent is the one who at the Persian court is called the White Rose of Nishapoor.'



I AM THE KHAN.

"The queen of the harim gazed uneasily at the fair vision before her. Already the Khan's affection was wandering from her to Mirah, the second favourite; what would it be when this slave's beauty met his gaze? She bent towards Mirah and whispered:

"This woman, who has been thus forcibly unveiled cannot have been seen by the Khan. She must not remain within the harim, our own fate is too deeply concerned."

"The captive seemed to understand the purport of this conversation, and smiled upon the women scornfully.

"Obtain my release, I would depart," she said imperiously. The queen and Mirah whispered together again, and then another slave of the harim having been summoned, the captive was bidden to retire with her and to await her freedom.

"Scarcely had these events taken place when Meklah entered the anderoon, and as he did so, Mirah, his second favourite, hastened towards him, and begged that he would recline upon the rich piles of carpet, and hear her chant that poem of Khiva to the accompaniment of music which the Khan liked best to hear.

"Meklah had not yet forgotten his discomfiture in the Khivan bazaar that morning, and yielded to her entreaty with a somewhat ill grace. As the wild and warlike melody floated forth, however, the Khan's eyes flashed, and his hand wandered to the jewelled hilt of his sword. Then the favourite stopped, and rested still at his feet.

"Core of my heart," she murmured, 'shall thy slave sing yet again?'

"The Khan motioned to her to continue, and this time she chose a dirge-like strain, and as she sang her eyes closely watched her royal lord. The song grew more like an eastern lullaby, and under its influence the Khan seemed to become restful. Softer and softer, sweeter and sweeter, grew the song; then the singer stopped—the Khan had fallen asleep! Remaining motionless for a few minutes, the woman afterwards bent down and touched the hand of the Khan with her lips. Then her hand wandered to his, and with a gentle effort she drew off from his finger the signet ring which he wore. She glanced towards where the queen had stationed herself to watch, and then the latter noiselessly approached and took the Khan's ring.

"Show it to the guards of the harim,"

the woman murmured, 'and thus thou mayest conduct the slave in safety from the harim to the bazaar. There exchange her for another, suitable to fill the lowest place in this the abode of our sovereign lord. Thou must needs be quick and prudent, for our lives depend upon the Khan sleeping till thou returnest.'

"So while the one hastened to the bazaar, the other remained by the Khan, and trembled every minute lest he should awake. Once he moved, and his eyes partly opened; whereupon the singer softly chanted a few strains, and Meklah sank to rest again.

"At last the queen returned, and gliding towards her like a ghost, handed the ring to Mirah, who placed it once more upon the finger of the sleeper. Slight and gentle as her touch was, in doing so it roused the Khan, and enclosing the woman's hand in his, he started up.

"Mirah," he said, looking at her fondly, 'hast thou remained watching thus thy lord while he slept? Indeed, a sweet singer art thou; one day thou shalt be queen of the harim.'

"The slave gently disengaged her hand from that of the Khan's, as she asked:

"Gracious and illustrious one, the slave whom thou purchased in the bazaar of Khiva to-day, awaits that thy sovereign glance may fall upon her. Lo! she is within the anderoon. Wilt thou not see her?"

"Bring her hence," said the Khan, and a minute afterwards there was led before the Ruler one who was in height the counterpart of the slave whom he had purchased.

"Thou Sheah," said the despot, 'now shalt thou remove thy veil, that I may see thee; if thou refuse, my women shall pluck it from thy face.'

"Obedient to the Khan's command, the slave raised her veil, and Mirah, glancing at her, looked with satisfaction thence into the face of the queen of the harim, who had made the exchange. The Khan laughed in derision.

"Why!" he exclaimed, 'thou didst well indeed to hide thee from the gaze of those who thronged the bazaar; thou hast not a vestige of womanly beauty in thy face. Thou peasant-faced drudge!' And at this epithet the other women of the harim laughed in merriment.

"It was always as well to appreciate the Khan's humour, they had learnt, even as

we, who live beneath the rule of this despot, know.

CHAPTER III.

"So the White Rose of Nishapoor was again placed as a slave in yonder bazaar, and stood with her head bowed down, striving to hide her face behind the rent veil.

"Before the evening of the same day

the bazaars, I saw that he was no common man among his race.

"Leisurely he sauntered along, stopping at times to exchange a few words with a bazaar keeper. When he reached yonder mart, he stopped and scanned the captives, and, as he did so, I saw the woman look at him through her rent veil. Passing carelessly on, apparently, he soon returned and saying, with a laugh, that he needed



HER SKIN WAS FAIR.

had passed, there came into Khiva yet another horseman. He too, according to debb (custom), wore the garb befitting a Kasak. Upon his head was a sheepskin taback, while the long mantle which flowed down, well nigh reached to the iron plates affixed to his riding boots. Fastened to a strap hung his short sabre, and when he dismounted to wander amid

another slave, paid for her, and placed the woman before him, after he had sprung into his saddle again.

"She made little or no resistance, and the reason of that was soon apparent. I, watching them closely, saw a glance of recognition pass between the horseman and his newly-purchased slave; and then, as he bent over her for one brief second,

his words—lightly spoken though they were—floated upon my ears in the still summer air :

“‘Courage!’ he murmured : ‘If anyone dares but to lay a hand upon thee, my sabre shall cleave him in twain.’

“And the slave whispered in return :

“‘Thou hast dared to enter the city of thine enemy alone in this disguise for the love of thy promised bride!’

“Hardly had the disguised Persian turned his horse’s head away from the bazaars, when a barshi, who had likewise observed them closely, exclaimed :

“‘This is no Kasak who buys a Sheah slave. Once before, I have seen his eagle glance fierce fixed upon the Kasaks, when I joined a foray which swept over the plains of Khorassan. He is a Persian dog! Seize him!’ The barshi, however,

kept at a safe distance, and placed his hand upon a bird’s claw which fastened his garment at the throat—for, as thou mayest know, such a talisman protects its wearer from the glance of an evil eye.

“There was a determined effort made to seize the horseman, but drawing his sabre, he whirled it high above his head, as his handsome and swift steed dashed headlong through the opposing crowd. He succeeded in avoiding a body of horsemen who chanced to arrive upon the scene, and made for the plains, while they followed but vainly in pursuit of the fugitives. When he had increased the distance between himself and his would-be

captors, he turned in the saddle for a minute, and shook his sabre in defiance at them, and then I saw that the arms of the ransomed woman were about his neck.

“In all their raids upon the province of Khorassan, the Kasaks ever since have avoided Nishapoor, for the Persian has gathered round him a fierce body of horsemen, and declares that he will yet avenge the insult to his beloved.

“So, to-day, in the bazaars of Khiva, it is not wise for a stranger to talk of the White Rose of Nishapoor, or of the

prince who snatched her thence——”

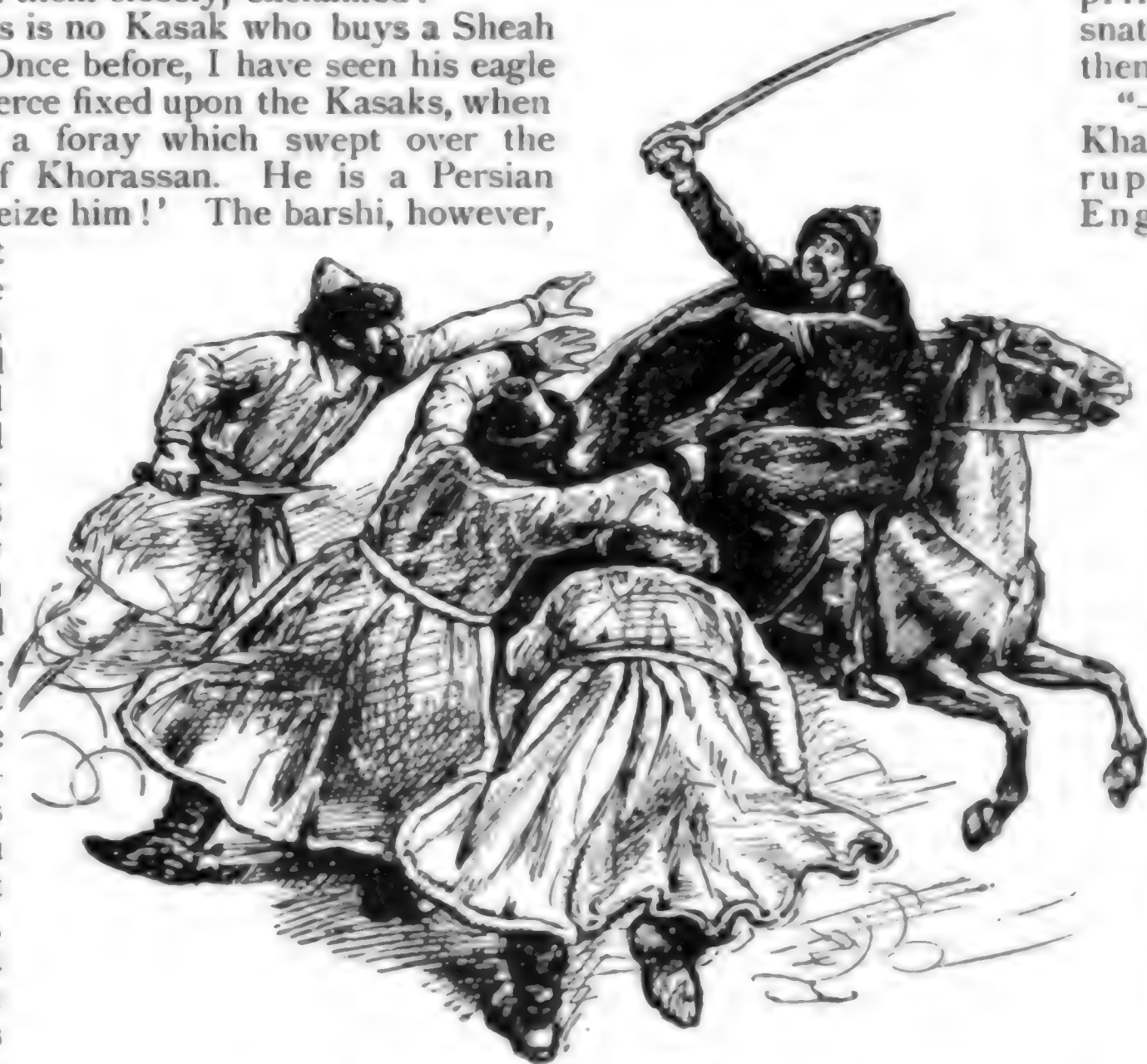
“—And the Khan!” interrupted the Englishman,

as he rose and proffered the promised coin, now that the story was ended. “Has he never learnt the trick that was practised upon him?”

“No one has thought

it necessary to inform him,” said the man gravely. “Do you not know that he is the favoured one of the Prophet, and that it is not for a subject to speak of what his great ruler doubtless already knows?”

“I daresay that is so,” said Danton, as he turned to wander through the bazaars; but there was a doubtful air in the way in which he spoke, as if the Khan’s omniscience was to him at least not fully proved.



THERE WAS A DETERMINED EFFORT MADE TO SEIZE THE HORSEMAN.

“Look upon this Picture and upon This.”

BEING SOME NOTES OF A JOURNEY FROM LEICESTER SQUARE TO HOXTON IN
SEARCH OF AMUSEMENT.

By GEORGE HUGHES.

THE saying that “one half the world doesn’t know how the other half lives,” is not more happily illustrated than in the matter of amusements. The club-man who crawls from Pall Mall to Piccadilly Circus, takes a sherry and bitters at the “Cri,” and finishes his morning’s toil by opening his letters, yawning over a newspaper, and lunching with a chum, does not know less of the daily working life of the average dock labourer or skilled mechanic, than the “gilded sons of the golden west,” who haunt the *foyer* of the Empire or the “Troc,” know of the relaxations and amusements of their humbler brethren, who seek the same at “The Queen’s, Poplar,” or “Gus Leach’s Hoxton Varieties.”

It is, however, only fair to the dweller in the East to point out that he is in this particular, as, indeed, is the case in some others we might name, better informed as to the habits and modes of thinking of his brother amusement seeker, than is the dweller in the civilised West. The Whitechapel “coster,” and the coatless critic of the Hoxton “gods,” know something, if not all, about the “toffs” and their ways. They are not struck dumb if they hear a singer, or other entertainer, use excellent English; in point of fact, they are quick to recognise and not slow to appreciate it, whereas, on the other hand, the “Johnnie” of the Empire and the Tivoli hails as a prodigy a man who, like Mr. Albert Chevalier, can render intelligible to him the language of the East End, and impersonate its life before his astonished gaze. The explanation is not far to seek. Leicester Square rarely, if ever, goes to Hoxton, while Hoxton not infrequently goes to Leicester Square.

It is not the purpose of this article to

discuss the question of amusements in general, and the music hall in particular. Justifying this, condemning that, or whitewashing the other, forms no part of our present intention; nor are we prepared to consider the ethics of the institutions under review. We must bear in mind that we are guests, upon this occasion at all events, at these places, and our business for the time being is to observe and record, reserving our censorship and moral reflections for some other and more suitable season.

It never does us any harm to endeavour to understand each other, and it is at least convenient to have some knowledge of a subject before condemning it, a truism which some good people appear to lose sight of when discoursing upon the subject of the amusements of the people, and especially music halls. To the purity-monger of the London County Council, whose ideal is grandmotherly legislation all round, it will be flatly inconceivable that an article can be written dealing with such a “sink of iniquity” as the Empire, Leicester Square, or such a “degrading abomination” as the “Pitfield Street Temple of Varieties,” without absolutely condemning both, and warning all readers that these are corner shops in “the broad way.” But to the average right-thinking, healthy-minded English man and woman, any subject appears to be legitimate matter for temperate discussion, which embraces an institution as popular as the music hall has undoubtedly become. The folks who would have us amused their way or not amused at all, will not find much comfort on our proposed journey. The policy of this magazine is not to cater for cranks, but to supply readable stuff for intelligent people.



The Empire Promenade & Buffet

The Empire Theatre of Varieties, situate on the northern and higher side of Leicester Square, is our first halting-place on our present journey. It is an imposing-looking building, with a striking and handsome frontage. Palms, ferns, and suspended baskets of creeping and trailing plants adorn the entrances, and give a hint of the profusion and tastefulness of the interior decorations. Once across the threshold, this impression is confirmed by the luxuriance and beauty which abound on every hand. Noble staircases, richly carpeted, with massive balustrades and gorgeous draperies, lead to the grand circle, of which a corner, with the adjacent private box, is shown in our next illustration. From this portion of the house, access is obtained to the stalls, fauteuils and box stalls, all of which are upholstered and fitted in the utmost style of luxurious elegance. Comfort is a paramount consideration with the enterprising managers

of this palace; the foot falls softly upon the thick pile of the carpets, and the limbs recline at ease in the daintily upholstered chairs and inviting lounges which meet one at every turn. The buffet, of which a drawing is given, is a most brilliant apartment, where refreshment, mostly of a liquid nature, is served in a style which is worthy of the place, while *recherche* flower stalls, smoking divans, and American bars, presided over by fair Hebes, tempt the votaries of the fragrant weed and admirers of the fragrant and choice among blossoms and beauty.

All these, it may safely be asserted, are institutions unknown at the house situated eastward, to which we shall presently be journeying. Beautiful women, flower stalls, carpeted promenades, and glittering refreshment saloons are not numbered among the attractions there, and in no point is the contrast between the two places more marked than in the *physique*,

dress, and bearing of the patrons of the two places. Let us now direct our attention to the stage. This is a splendidly-appointed and ample institution at the Empire, with all appurtenances of scenery,

apparent when it is mentioned that the Empire depends very largely upon extensive ballets, of which there are usually two danced at each performance, one at about eight and the other at about ten

o'clock. These are always gorgeous spectacles, arranged on a scale of the greatest magnificence, and mounted in a very artistic and sumptuous manner. They are described upon the tastefully got up programmes as Ballets Divertissements, are arranged in one or more tableaux, and illustrate some story, incident, or mythological passage; they are arranged at present by Madame Katti Lanner, a ballet-



DRESS CIRCLE AT THE "EMPIRE."

machinery, and cellarage, perfectly fitted and lighted, of great height and depth; on the scale of the Grand Opera at Paris, or the Scala at Milan, capable of the most elaborate spectacular effects, and with accommodation for a perfect army of performers. The reason for this will be

mistress of world-wide reputation, which she works indefatigably to maintain. They are danced to music specially composed by Mons. L. Wenzel, the director of the Empire orchestra, or other well-known composers; the designing and execution of the costumes, which are of a degree of

elegance which beggars description, entail an immense amount of careful thought, and exhibit wonderful ingenuity as well as much artistic feeling. The wigs are masterpieces from the hand of that past master in the art of decorating the human head, Mr. "Willie" Clarkson; the story is unfolded in pantomime; and the whole enterprise gives employment to some hundreds of people who work hard in the production of pictures whose beauty dazzles the eye, and makes the head whirl with their vastness and intricacy, and which occupy from thirty to forty minutes in representation.

This, again, is an institution unknown to Leach's, for obvious reasons. The rest of the programme is made up of "turns," consisting of singers, comic, serio-comic, American, and burnt cork artists.

Another institution peculiar to the Empire, and houses situate in its neighbourhood, is a French *cantatrice*, generally of the "comic" order, and very "French," who dances as well as sings. In fact, most of the women combine song and dance in the music halls. This French flavour in the entertainment is

probably to be accounted for by a corresponding element in the audience, which usually numbers a somewhat strong Continental and decidedly large Semitic following. Orchestral music, of a fairly high order of artistic excellence, occupies a conspicuous position in the programme, and other items are furnished by tumblers, Arab and others; conjurors, the cleverest that can be obtained; Irish "knockabout" comedians, pantomimists, and eccentric musicians of every description; many of whom are extremely ingenious. But, the ballet is the thing, it is the "dainty dish," the *piece de resistance*; and before its blaze of beauty, colour, and marvellous pictures, all other attractions pale into comparative insignificance. These wondrous sights are away from all the prose of humdrum work-a-day life, they are unique among entertainments, unsurpassed in any Continental city, and although, to the man who has never acquired the taste, they may pall after a little while, and become positively tedious if often seen, they yet possess an appeal to the imagination which may not be denied. The audiences wax with their advent, and wane with their con-



AN "EMPIRE" BALLET.

elusion; sometimes, indeed, the finish of the ballet is the signal for something very like a general stampede.

Well, it is time we were on the move, so we make our way round the circle, the atmosphere of which is getting rather thick by this time with cherry-blossom, patchouli, and stephanotis, and descend the grand staircase in time to find the gigantic janitor politely intimating the management's views upon the subject of gentlemen who have dined "not wisely but too well" to a cape-coated "swell," who appears to be desirous of arguing the point, a whim which the amiable janitor good-humouredly indulges up to a certain point, and then — why, then the management's views upon the subject are enforced, and the "swell" is assisted back into his hansom, and starts to try his luck elsewhere.

We tumble into a hansom also, for time presses; light up, there is just leisure for a cigar, and tell the Jehu to drive to the Holborn Town Hall. Still going due east, we mount the plebeian tramcar and plough our way down Clerkenwell Road, along old Wilderness Row, across Goswell Road. Now we are in Old Street, St. Luke's Madhouse on the one hand and the Hall of Science on the other, we catch a flying glimpse of Whitecross Street as we pass, and the odour of it pursues us even unto the City Road, crossing which we are

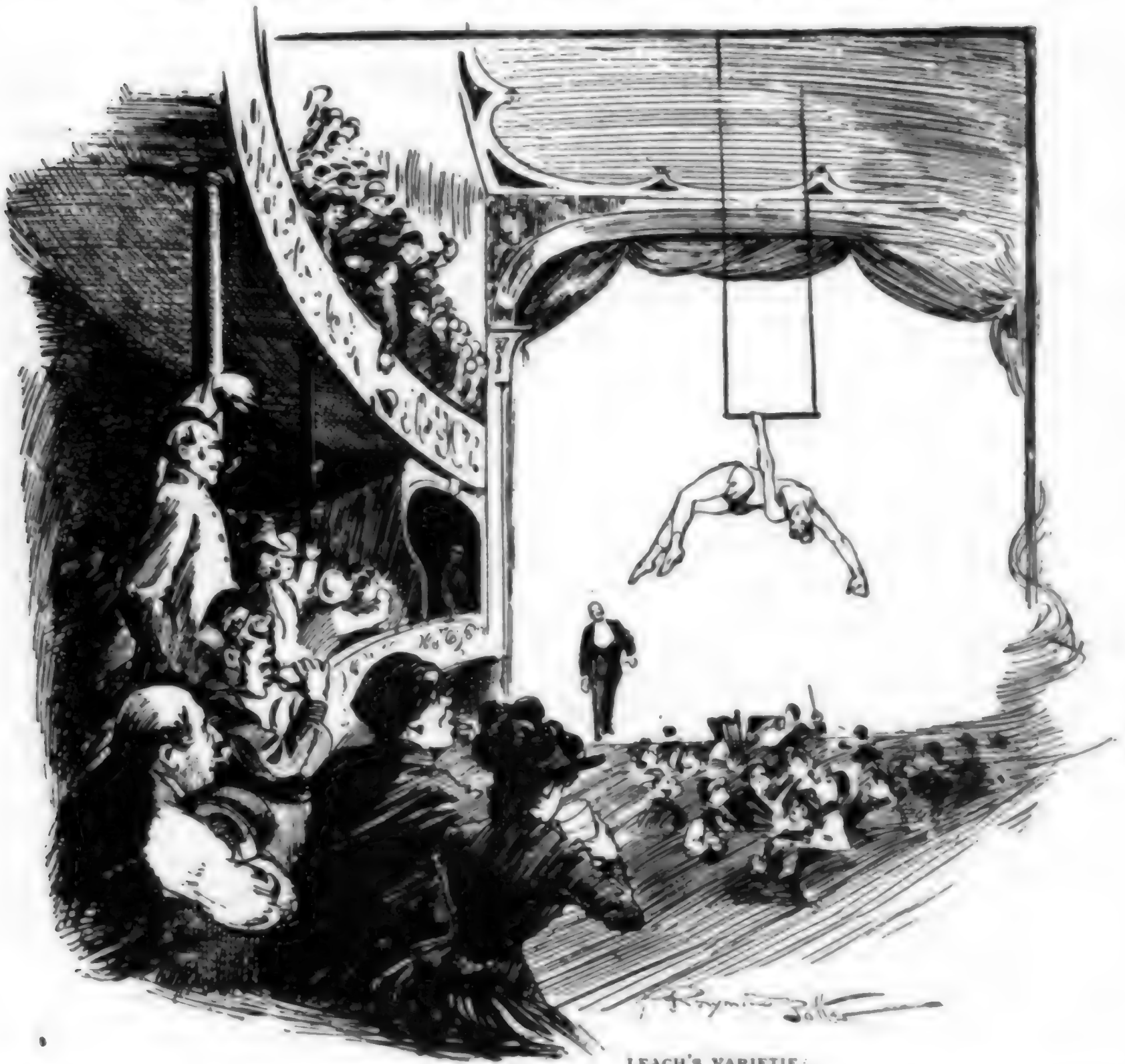
in that portion of Old Street which may be described as the land of furniture "as advertised;" we are in the last lap of the journey to Shoreditch, when the conductor puts his head inside and announces "Pitfield Street, 'Oxton." Right, we are going to "'Oxton," so we dismount, to find ourselves at the head of a fairly wide but eminently unprepossessing thoroughfare, lined on either side with stalls and barrows, upon which, beneath flaring naphtha lamps, are exhibited for sale onions, lettuces, and various other vegetables;

cheap glass and crockery ware, fish, tortoisés, looking-glasses, whelks, oysters, toilet appliances, and a variety of articles of *vertu* too numerous to mention. In the gutter, on the pavements, all over the road, dodging about, around and under the barrows, darting hither and thither in every direction, into doorways and up courts, are children. Helter-skelter, pell-mell, chil-



A QUIET CORNER AT THE "EMPIRE."

dren running pitch headforemost into you as you struggle along, you stumble over children sitting in the gutters, and give halfpennies to children squalling. Children on every hand, of all sorts, sizes, and ages; but all tow-headed, dirty and unkempt. Such is Pitfield Street, the street of which we have come in search; for hereabouts is situated the particular "theatre of varieties" of which we are to form a portion of the audience. Just as we are making



LEACH'S VARIETIES.

enquiry at a butcher's shop situate at the corner of the first turning on the right, which is many degrees more unsavoury than the main thoroughfare, as to the way to Leach's, we become aware of a curious sight. Drawn up in an even line along the edge of the pavement is a motley crowd some five deep, reaching for about a dozen yards, kept in almost military order by one or two determined-looking men in civilian garb, whose lightest word is evidently held as authoritative; men who are accustomed, if they were not born, to be obeyed. This is the first sign of law and order with which we have met, so far, in the purlieus of Hoxton, and our surprise is rather increased than diminished as we note that the crowd is ranged before an insignificant-looking public-house, on the south side of which is a low-browed doorway, within which again is a primitive pay-box. This proves to be the entrance to Leach's, and the crowd is the

audience which is waiting to fill the second house, for two houses a night is the order of things at this theatre of varieties, and these are waiting patiently until the doors open once again.

It is really remarkable the way in which these janitors of "Leach's" ("chuckers aat," they are dubbed hereabout) manage the crowds which besiege this temple of the Muses. There are only two or three of them, but—they are sufficient. The footway is kept clear, and the traffic of the street is unimpeded, no matter what may be the magnitude or the condition of the waiting audience. We have only time to note this, when a general movement of expansion warns us that the doors are open, we are borne up to the pay-box, and presently find ourselves inside the building. A few minutes later and it is full, not metaphorically or elegantly full, but crammed full; and as we look upon the serried rows upon rows of people, we should estimate

that there must be some eighteen hundred to two thousand souls in the house. The ground floor is occupied by a huge pit, admittance to which costs less pence than the corresponding position at the Empire costs shillings. Above this rises the circle, at each end of which are situated "private boxes," which, by the way, are private only in name here, as any comer (who wears boots) is eligible for admission, no matter who are the other occupants, until the box is full. Over the circle is the gallery, which takes up almost to the ceiling at the back. The whole house when filled presents a remarkable appearance from the stage; a dense mass of faces breaking up to the footlights and rising right up to the roof, where it is lost in the darkness and distance, a spectacle which once seen is not easily forgotten.

"A somewhat differently dressed crowd from that at the Empire," you say. Well, yes. The gentlemen here do not all wear their coats—shirt sleeves find more universal favour; hats are worn sometimes—greasy and battered bowlers for the most part; moleskin caps too, with flaps for tying over the ears, with strings attached to fasten beneath the chin. Corderoy is more in evidence as a trousering than either vicuna or broadcloth, and, as a rule, the necktie is worn without a collar. The ladies (pronounced "laidees") are not beautiful, but they are much dressed. Fringes, greased and cut straight along the forehead, just above the eyes, are the order of the day, or, rather, night; the rest of the hair is frequently dressed into a string-coloured net, which hangs down to where the neck joins the shoulders. There is a fashion both in the cut and colour of the dresses worn by the fair members of the audience; red, blue, and black are the favourite colours, the skirt in almost every case being flounced from the waist downwards; but among the middle-aged and elderly, almost every possible variety of feminine attire (except the picturesque) is to be observed. One striking difference between this and the Leicester Square palace is, that here no smoking or drinking is allowed in the auditorium; the latter restriction may be an advantage, the former certainly is not, for the atmosphere of a building crammed almost to suffocation, on a steaming-hot night, with an unwashed mass of men and women, clad in much-worn corderoy, frowsy dresses, and dirty linen, is not a



SKIPPING-ROPE DANCE.

great improvement upon the patchouli, cherry-blossom, and stephanotis of the Empire.

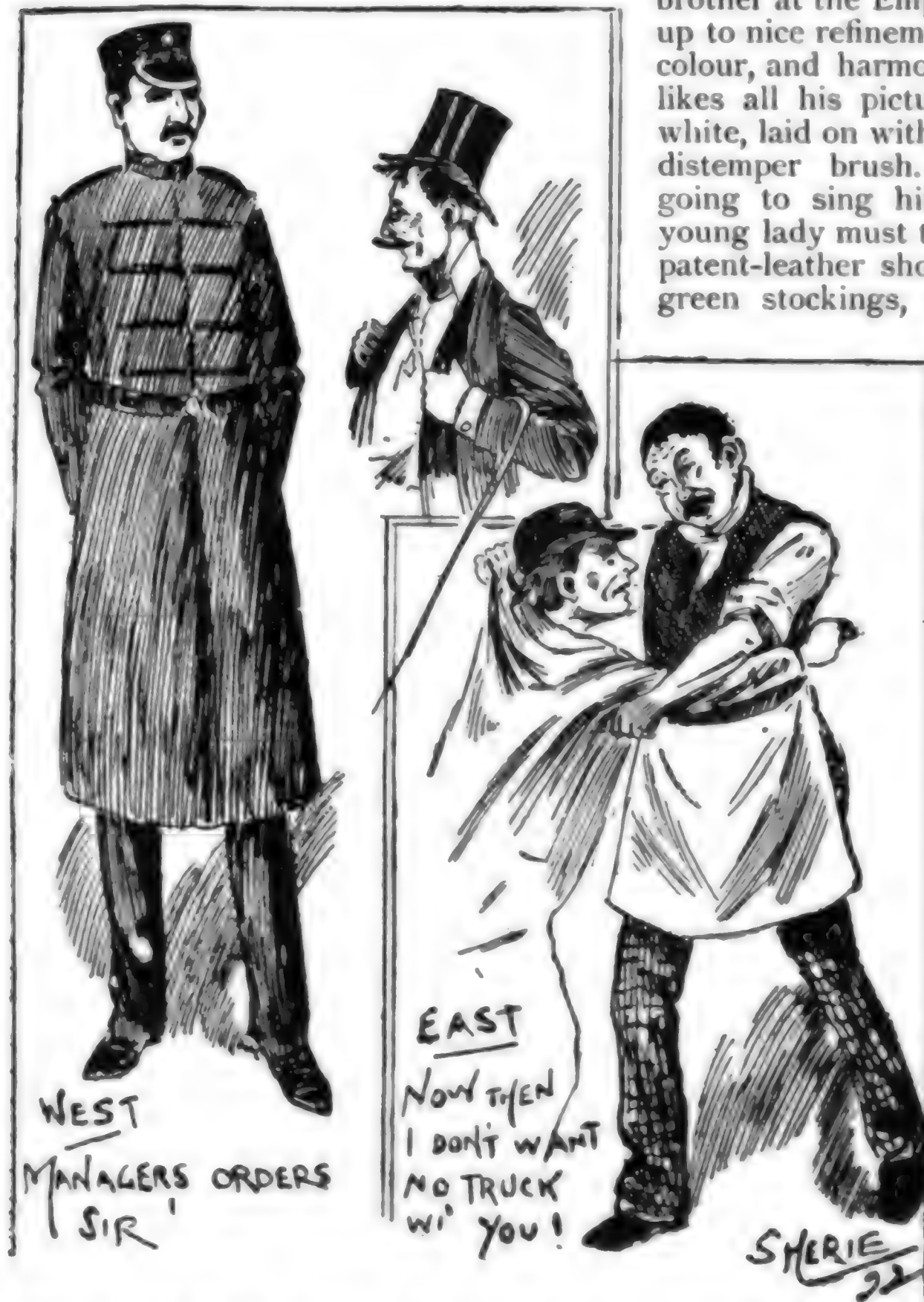
The row, at present, is deafening, nor does it diminish to any appreciable extent, when the dozen or so of instrumentalists, who constitute the band, strike up an overture. But, when at length the curtain goes up, and a few introductory bars bring on a well-built, athletic young fellow, who proceeds to walk a slack-wire, invisible at a little distance from the stage, in a neat and workmanlike manner, the house quiets down, and all settle themselves to the business of the hour. Herein is the first real point of divergence which strikes us, as between this audience and that at the West-end. "Leach's" people are all downright in earnest. They mean business, these good people of Hoxton; they are people who are accustomed to work hard themselves, and they do not believe that they are getting "two-pennorth" for their "tuppence," unless the people on the stage work hard, too. The sentimental young lady must yell out

her pathetic chorus at the top of her voice; the comedy-merchant must bellow forth his witticisms—most of them the supposed utterances of a wild inebriate—until his overworked voice becomes little better than a hoarse roar; the "clog-wolloper" must dance until, with streaming face and starting eyes, he staggers into the wings to choke, and gasp, and fight for breath;

him, if he will; but not so with the regular customer at the Pitfield Street Theatre, he is in deadly earnest, there are no "arf larks" about him, he has paid his money and he means to enjoy himself with all his might, all his voice, and both hands—not to mention his feet. He represents a younger, or more elementary, phase of human nature than his better dressed brother at the Empire; he is not educated up to nice refinements, and distinctions of colour, and harmony, and movement; he likes all his pictures done in black and white, laid on with a bold hand, and a big distemper brush. If a young lady is going to sing him an Irish song, that young lady must trip on in a pair of black patent-leather shoes with buckles, bright green stockings, a very short skirt of

flowered chintz, a kerchief tied across her bosom, and a scarlet cloak with a hood, which envelopes her golden locks while she sings, and falls back upon her shoulders when she breaks into a furious jig, claps her hands, and shouts "hooroo!" Moreover, he likes about eighteen to twenty-five verses of it, and flatly refuses to accept it as genuine, unless it advocates Home Rule of the most Utopian order, attained by the most lawless means. The audience at Hoxton dearly love a ventriloquial entertainment of the kind which has been popularised by Lieutenant Walter Cole; consequently, at intervals of a few weeks, a

ventriloquist is to be found among the artists engaged by the proprietor, than whom no one better knows the tastes and requirements of the audiences which frequent the house with remarkable regularity. Another feature of the Pitfield Street Theatre is to be found in the "sisters" who figure in the bill with unvarying constancy. These "sisters," by the way, are a curious



and as for the "heavy man," who personates the villains in the miniature plays, called "sketches," which are always performed here, he must "split the ears of the groundlings," "tear a passion to tatters, to very rags," before the audience will believe in his villainy, or accept him as a genuine specimen of a wicked man. The *blasé* man of the West may languidly signify his approval of the fare set before

study : a couple of young women, rarely, if ever, related, who can sing a little—usually a very little—and shuffle a few steps, come on in short frocks, long hair, and, sometimes, silk stockings, to do what is known in the parlance of “the ’alls” as a song and dance turn. It is often an inane performance, inartistic in the last degree, totally lacking in such elements as might make it either graceful or amusing ; but it is a recognised thing, and meets with marks of approval which testify to its popularity. The rule is broken sometimes, of course, and occasionally a pair of “sisters” appear, who are really clever step or skirt dancers, and who can, and do, sing some songs which are not absolute nonsense. The institution which takes the place of the Empire ballet at Leach’s, is what is known as the sketch, without a mention of which no notice of this place of amusement could be regarded as complete. The comedy sketches are well received, but here again the characteristic of the Hoxtonian asserts itself, and drama of the good old-fashioned “penny, plain — tuppence, coloured” description, full of thrilling situations, blood-curdling incidents, black-hearted villainy and white-souled virtue, finds supreme favour.

The sketches which attain the highest popularity and the most rapturous applause, are those which tell a story of a domestic nature, dealing with the life and society with which the audience are most familiar, either from personal experience or newspaper police reports. A good rousing melodrama reduced from four acts to twenty-five minutes, intro-

ducing the persecuted heroine, the “common or garden” villain, the magnanimous and robust hero, and the inevitable low comedy man or woman, with a deadly struggle, a murder or two, and a striking picture to bring down the curtain, showing virtue triumphant and villainy defeated, is always a safe card to play ; as a consequence, such a piece generally figures as an important item in the programme, and is kept back until the “last turn,” as the *bonne bouche* of the evening. An Irish playlet is also sure of a hearty welcome if it fulfils the requirements

of the audience, which, if not exactly critical, is certainly critically exacting. So all the standard Irish dramas have been laid under contribution, and the *Colleen Bawn*, *Arrah-na-pogue*, *The Shaugraun*, *et hoc genus omne*, have been dished and served in an almost infinite variety of forms. A glance round the house ere we leave, forces the reflection that much credit is due to the management for the really splendid discipline and order maintained, as also that this and similar places are great social institutions. Here are vast numbers of

people who are kept out of further mischief and in good humour at a trifling cost by an enterprising caterer who understands their requirements.

“Not a very ennobling or profitable way of spending their time,” you remark.

We are out in the street by now. “Look in here ; this is one of their homes ! What do you say now, my censorious friend ?”

“Aye, what ? Why, well, yes, they might do worse than Leach’s.”

Yes ; and they do.



BLOOD AND THUNDER.

"The Vendetta

OF

CORANI."

By J. FEARON.

CHAPTER I.

OUTSIDE, the hot palpitating sunshine of a late afternoon in Venice. Inside, in a great bed-chamber of a palace-hotel, two men deeply thinking, their thoughts upon the same subject, though widely different, as their faces show. The man in the chair by the bedside is thinking and feeling as a man of deep affections, and of passionate nature, would be likely to do, under the memory of an irremediable wrong done, not to him personally, but to one dearer to him far than himself; a double wrong, the memory of which never leaves him, and which he has sworn to avenge, if it ever be in his power. In every line of his brooding face that determination is written, though it is the face of a man with an amiable, even a sweet disposition. The naturally tender mouth is rigidly compressed now, the dark eyes, tender as the mouth, look black rather than deep blue, as they really are, and are fixed moodily yet fiercely in an unseeing gaze where the sunshine, stealing through the blinds, plays upon the wall in the shaded room. A man with a handsome chiselled face, and a massive head, the thick dark hair, just touched with grey, thrown back and falling compact and wavy upon his shoulders. A man of medium height, but large framed, deep chested, and with small plump hands and feet.

To him the young man upon the bed was indeed a contrast. Tall and slight of frame, thin almost to attenuation; extremely fair, and delicately featured; with a faint light, not earth-born, shining upon his young pale face, in spite of the lines which deep-seated mental and bodily pain had pencilled upon his forehead, and round

his mouth. He lay there watching the man in the armchair near his bed. He knew that the theme in both their minds was the same, though set in different keys; and wished that the discord of the other man's heart tune were more in harmony with his own. For Alfred Carmichael, lying patiently in the bed which he knew he would never quit alive, had recalled the teaching of his gentle Scottish foster-mother; lessons of faith, of hope, and charity, which he had learned from her lips indeed, but far more from her life. When one lies at the point of death, such lessons having once been graven in the heart are apt, maybe, to take a deeper significance, a wider meaning; and death-shadowed eyes may view the past with a very different gaze from those of stirring life.

The foster-mother of Alfred Carmichael, dearly loved and remembered by him, had been the wife of the man sitting now by his bedside. And the only objects of the husband's care and affection since his wife died, had been his foster-son and that foster-son's little daughter.



Deep in sombre thought as the Italian sits, the sound of his young master's voice recalls him on the instant, and a marvellous change comes over his face, as he shakes back his hair, and rising stands by the bedside.

"Baptisto!"

"Signor! I thought that you slept still."

"I have been sleeping; but I woke a little while ago, and have been lying still, thinking. You have nothing to tell me, Baptisto?" and Alfred scanned the man's face eagerly.

"Nothing, signor, of importance. I will, however, tell you. But first——"

He went to a table, and returning with fruit and wine, placed them before Alfred, and sat down again beside him. Alfred took some wine, and, returning the glass to Baptisto, said, as he began to eat the fruit:

"Now tell me all. I see you have news of some kind. Were you right? Are they here in Venice?"

"They are here; and I found out their hotel, signor."

"Ah! and you saw them—you saw her? Oh, Baptisto, will she let me see my little Alison again?"

Baptisto turned away his face as his master eagerly spoke; but, after a moment, looked tenderly at him, his dark eyes suffused with tears.

"Alas, no, Signor Alfredo," he said. "She will not let her come, or I would have brought her to you. I saw her—the signora—and prayed her to lend me the little angel but for an hour. But she would not trust us, she said, for she was sure you would keep her yourself, or send her to her grandfather in Scotland; and she did not choose, she said, that you should have her."

Alfred sighed bitterly.

"She need not have feared," he said. "Since my father's pride made him cast off his only son because of my having married beneath me, he would hardly receive my little darling with such a brand of shame as has come upon her now, even when I am dead, and though the fault is not mine."

There was a short silence, and then Baptisto said:

"You could claim the little one, you know, signor."

"No, I think not; not without publicity."

"Ah, well, the time will come."

"Never—for me to see my little daughter again in this world," responded the young father in a trembling voice; and then more firmly, "Do not deceive yourself, my poor Baptisto; I shall not be here long now. But tell me, what were you thinking of a while ago, when you thought I was asleep?"

Baptisto did not at first reply; his heart was in a tumult of passionate emotion. But at last he managed to control his voice, and answered:

"Ah, signor! What do I always think of when I am alone? Listen! Two scenes are always before me—the one of that afternoon when we were together in the cabaret, and that villain—that we thought was far away—came in, and you struck him across the mouth with your glove; and I saw murder in his face, so plainly. And the other scene—Ah! I can never forget that. When I saw you, son of my heart, lying at my feet, bleeding from a wound in your breast, and Guiseppe Rendano wiping his sword, and looking down upon you with a smile upon his face. Oh, heaven! Oh, heaven! Would that I had killed him then!" And Baptisto raised his clenched hands and his eyes to heaven, no longer able to control himself, till his master's quiet voice recalled and calmed him almost as by a spell. He sat down again, and raising Alfred's wasted hand to his lips, murmured some words of contrition.

"Baptisto," said the young man presently, "I know it is all through your love for me, and because you make my wrongs your own; but you must keep the promise you made me at first, when you thought I was going to die that day—how long ago? One loses count of time lying here doing nothing."

"Just two months, Signor Alfredo."

"Ah, well, I remember that day that you swore to kill Rendano——"

"I did, signor. My only regret was that I had not killed him when I found you, but he fled too quickly for me, and I could not pursue him, because I had you to care for."

"Yes; and afterwards you promised me you would let him alone, Baptisto."

"I did, signor. At that moment I was ready to promise anything to please you."

"Is—is Rendano now in Venice?" Alfred asked, after a short silence.

"I know not, signor," Baptisto an-

swered hesitatingly; "but at least I did not see him this day."

"Well, now," said Alfred, "swear to me, Baptisto, by whatever you hold most sacred, that you will never seek for vengeance upon Rendano."

Baptisto put his hand inside the bosom of his waistcoat, and drew out a little bronze crucifix, hanging upon a chain of red gold hair.

"My mother's crucifix—my wife's hair," he said. "Those two good women both loved God, though their creed was different; by their memory, and by the God they both loved, I swear it." He kissed the little cross, and restored it to its hiding-place. Then, bending over the boy he had loved and tended all his young life, he smiled at him tenderly, laying his hand upon his golden hair.

"There! you may rest now, Signor Alfredo," he said.

"Yes," answered Alfred, "it is better so. Be content to leave him in God's hands. 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay,' saith the Lord. And I would not have the stain of blood upon your soul for my sake, dear Baptisto. And now, there is one thing more"—but he paused for a few minutes before proceeding. At length, turning his head a little from his companion, the young man said slowly, and evidently with effort, "It is about her—Agnes, you know. Baptisto, I don't think she can be all bad; she loves her child, and will not part from her—that, at any rate, is in her favour."

Baptisto said nothing; but he shook

his head. He had his own opinion about that; but his master continued:

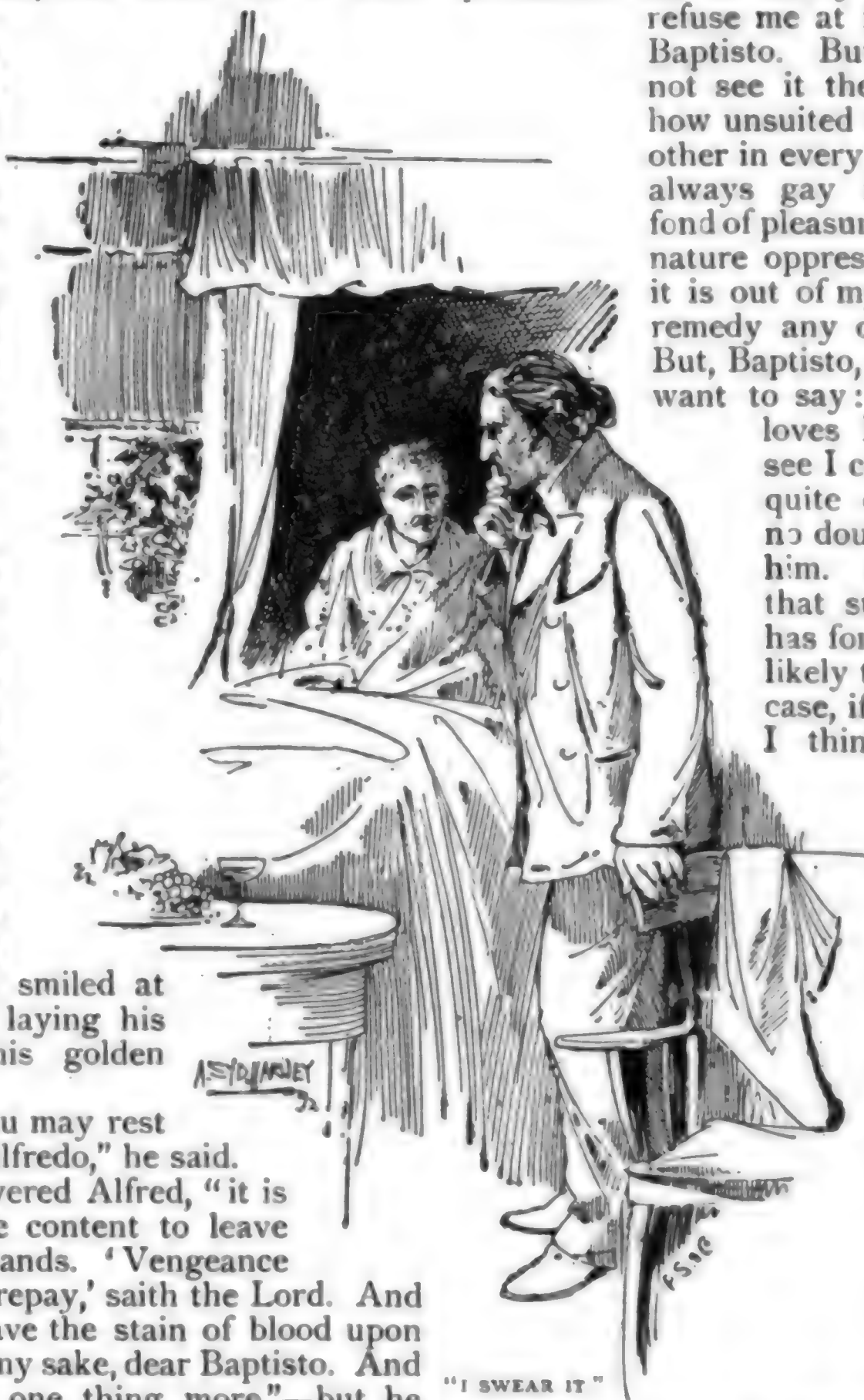
"However, good or bad, I can never forget that she has been my wife, and that I loved her once. If she could not love me it was not her fault. I can see things differently now. I never ought to have persuaded her to marry me. She did refuse me at first, you know, Baptisto. But though I could not see it then, I know now how unsuited we were to each other in every way. She was always gay in temper and fond of pleasure, and my grave nature oppressed her. Well, it is out of my power now to remedy any of my mistakes. But, Baptisto, this is what I want to say: I suppose she

loves Rendano—you see I can speak of him quite calmly—I have no doubt that she loves him. But I much fear that such love as he has for her is very unlikely to last. In that case, if he forsake her, I think she will go back to her own people, though it is most likely they will have nothing to do with her. You have told me, Baptisto, that you do not intend to take service——"

"Never, signor; I have sufficient for the little I require, and I

shall never have another master."

"No; then there is one thing I want you to do for me. Will you, dear Baptisto, faithful old friend, try from time to time to make yourself acquainted with her movements. I feel convinced that she will—perhaps before long—drift back to her native city; and, if you will, I should like you to establish yourself there—you hate the climate, I know——"



"I SWEAR IT"

"Surely," interrupted Baptisto, "it is truly detestable. But that matters not. Continue, signor."

"Well," Alfred resumed, "I want you to do this for my sake and my child's—to be on the watch for the time when Agnes may need a friend. If you ever find her in any kind of need, go to her assistance; help her in my name and for my sake. I intend to have a certain sum of money banked, that you may draw it at your discretion, for her need or the child's. To-morrow I intend to arrange all clearly. I cannot explain more fully now. But if ever you come across Agnes, unless—unless you can approve of the life she is leading, I implore you, Baptisto, to rescue my little Alison. If you do this, make one appeal for her to her grandfather; and if that be useless, be a father to her yourself, as you have been to me, and bring her up entirely as you please—there is no one I would rather leave my little daughter to than yourself, old friend."

Exhausted with talking, Alfred now lay back upon his pillows, only looking appealingly at Baptisto for an answer.

The old man bent over him tenderly, stroking back the hair from his damp forehead.

"It shall be a most sacred trust, signor," he said; "and if I can ever again know happiness it will come to me so, through the dear little daughter of my master. Ah, the carissima! But you could not yourself, signor, be more tender to the little one than I would be!"

Alfred smiled faintly: "You would spoil her, I daresay," he said; "Well, it is all in God's hands. Thank you, dear Baptisto, for all you have promised to do for me. Now I think I can sleep with a quieter mind."

"I hope so, signor," and kissing the hand which Alfred extended to him, he left him to repose, betaking himself to the kitchen to prepare his young master's supper; for Baptisto was a skilful cook, and would trust no one but himself with the preparation of the invalid's food, more especially now that he knew he had but a short time longer to care for the object of his tender solicitude.

The time was indeed shorter than he had expected.

In less than a fortnight, Alfred Carmichael passed away; his last thoughts and words breathing forgiveness for the wife

who had betrayed him, and praying for the welfare of his innocent child.

CHAPTER II.

Four years had passed away. During that time Baptisto had faithfully endeavoured to redeem his promise to his master. For more than two years he had kept himself, to some extent, acquainted with the movements of Agnes. He knew that she was still with Rendano, first in Venice, afterwards in Paris. But he knew scarcely anything else, and latterly he had heard nothing at all about her. But he waited.

In the early days after his master's death he had been to his father, and telling him the whole story, had prayed him to institute a search for the child. Meeting with a refusal he then determined, if possible, to get possession of her, and constitute himself her guardian by the authority of her father's will.

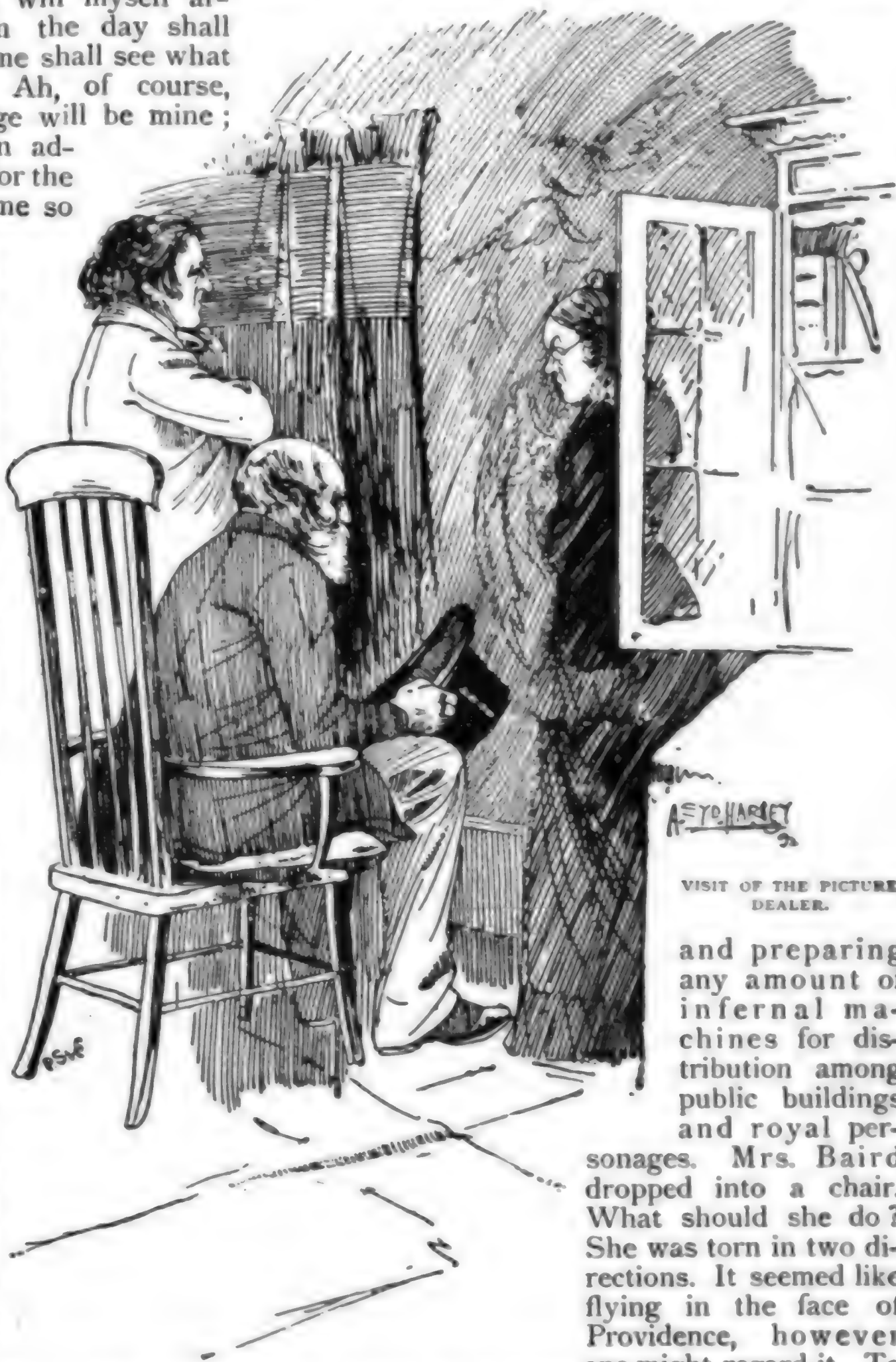
In a large room, with a small one leading from it, on the third stair of a close leading out of one of the great thoroughfares of Glasgow, Baptisto found a dwelling. Mrs. Baird, his landlady, was at first disposed to be indignant, when the Italian applying to her for lodgings stated that one room would be sufficient. But as she happened to possess this large room, with the small one opening out of it, and allowed Baptisto to become aware of the fact, he speedily overcame her objections, professing himself so enchanted with the accommodation, that Mrs. Baird not only agreed to let him have it, but doubled the terms she had intended to ask on the spot. This, however, made no difference to Baptisto. He seemed to have fallen in love with the place. And yet it did not look inviting. It was a big, gaunt room, evidently long unused, and totally out of repair; yet this eccentric Italian looked round it with a smile of positive affection, beaming so delightedly upon the landlady that she began to think she herself had made an impression on him, and regretted that she had not her best dress on.

"It is a fine—a splendid room," said Baptisto, "and it is a great honour that madame will allow me—a poor foreigner—to occupy it, an apartment so noble. There is only one little thing! I wish to get the permission of madame, to do with this room—to garnish it—entirely according to my own fancy. Not only the

chairs and tables, but also the walls, and all the room. In that case I will enter now, immediately—I will but fly to bring here my baggage from the station. Madame need be at no trouble for the room at all, I take it as it is; and all that I shall require, I will myself arrange. And soon the day shall come when madame shall see what she shall see! Ah, of course, madame, the charge will be mine; and also I pay in addition something for the favour that madame so graciously accords me; and also one month's rent in advance. And so, madame, I depart, only to return to your respectable abode in what you call the clink of an eye. Addio, madame, addio!"

And with that Mrs. Baird's eccentric and gesticulating visitor withdrew, leaving that lady so overcome by his politeness, and lavish disregard of money, that for the moment she forgot to find anything strange in his views and plans with regard to his newly acquired lodging. He had, however, scarcely departed, and she had hardly had time mentally to hug herself with delight at the prospect of receiving so handsome a rent for her big room as the Italian proposed to pay, when a fearful thought flashed into her mind. What if he were a Nihilist? Mrs. Baird stood aghast in the centre of her kitchen. To suppose him one was to condemn him as one. To think

that she could have been so blind! It was all as plain as daylight. Of course he wanted a large unfurnished room, that he might be free to do exactly as he liked in it, with a view, no doubt, to making dangerous experiments with dynamite,



VISIT OF THE PICTURE-DEALER.

and preparing any amount of infernal machines for distribution among public buildings and royal personages. Mrs. Baird dropped into a chair. What should she do? She was torn in two directions. It seemed like flying in the face of Providence, however one might regard it. To allow such wicked designs to be carried out in her own house, to risk the lives of her neighbours, not to speak of her own. No, she thought it would never do. But then the money! She had grandchildren; she might be able to save something for

them. This thought caused Mrs. Baird to decide in Baptisto's favour; and afterwards she could not be glad enough that she had done so. Of all the lodgers she had ever had, he paid her best, and gave the least trouble; and he was always so respectful and courteous to his landlady, that he put her in the best of humours with herself; while with her little grandchildren, who often visited her, Mr. Corani was quickly a favourite, by reason of the games of play they had with him, and the frequent visits they paid with him to a neighbouring sweetie shop.

He was the very soul of industry, was this Mr. Baptisto Corani. In a short time, with scarcely any help, he had done all that was requisite in the way of staining, and painting and varnishing that his rooms required. Then he proceeded to furnish them more completely. For this purpose he ransacked second-hand shops for odds and ends, much worn perhaps, but curious and artistic, and furbished them up skilfully with his own hands. No two chairs had he alike; no modern table or other article found a place in Baptisto's apartment; all was old-fashioned, quaint and curious. The cleaning, decorating and furnishing finished, Baptisto began to paint his walls with fantastic groups of fine design and execution, for he was by nature and early training an artist, though for many years now he had wanted the perseverance necessary to make painting his profession. When he had scattered isolated groups here and there over all the walls, he called Mrs. Baird "to see what she should see." The good lady was as delighted as she was astonished; and the next day she brought a friend, a dealer in pictures, to see the frescoes. He offered on the spot to take anything Baptisto might paint for him. But the artist shook his head; he had no present intention of painting any pictures to sell. The dealer might leave his card, yes; but it was not likely he would hear from him. He painted but for his own amusement and distraction.

Baptisto had been a great reader; and he bought himself a number of books, cheap editions of his favourite authors, both English and Italian, and then, he told himself, he need never be dull; with his painting and books, and little domestic cares. His cooking he did himself in Mrs. Baird's kitchen; she was always pleased to see him there, her amiable lodger who

was always so ready to show any little kindness to herself, or "the bairns." Had Mrs. Baird been asked—as indeed she often was—what sort of a man her foreign lodger was, she would probably have described him as one of the most amiable and easy-going of men; happy in disposition, and troubling himself about nothing. But could she have seen him, or could his little playmates have seen him, as he was sometimes, shut up in his own room, they would scarcely have recognised in this gloomy man, with fiercely drawn mouth and frowning brow, their smiling, joyous Mr. Corani. Baptisto could not forget. The past would constantly come back to him, and as he sat brooding upon it, time after time, with a book open but unread before him, he found himself more than once regretting his promise to his dead master, the man whose foul wrongs had been and were the greatest bitterness in his own life. Sometimes when he sat brooding upon this subject, he felt well-nigh distracted with a burning desire to avenge the beloved boy who lay in his grave far away from his own land, as surely murdered as if the assassin's hand had laid him dead at one cruel blow. And she—the false fair woman whom he had honoured by calling wife—was she not also guilty of his death? Forgive! To a nature like Baptisto's it is easier to forgive a personal wrong than one which reaches us through the stricken heart of one held dearer than our own life.

During the daytime Baptisto usually went out but little; but at night he would often go long distances, sauntering along the most frequented thoroughfares, remaining late, often till the noisy crowds had gone their several ways, and he found himself almost in solitude in the silent streets. He seemed not to have any special object in these wanderings. If he had, he scarcely acknowledged it to himself. Yet, now and then, he would scan one woman's face in passing, or turn to look after another whose figure and walk seemed familiar to him; once or twice following such a one, only to find that he was mistaken. Once, in passing the great circus which a crowd was just leaving, standing for a moment to watch the people, a slender, golden-haired child stood before him for a moment, waiting, it might be, with her mother till a carriage should come up. Unable to resist the impulse, Baptisto laid his hand gently

upon the child's shoulders ; but drawing closer to her mother, she looked up at him shyly with dark eyes, quite unlike those of his master's little daughter ; and, though he had not expected anything else, Baptisto felt a momentary disappointment as he turned away.

Week by week now, from constantly brooding over his trouble, Baptisto grew sadder and more despondent. In spite of his earnest fighting against it, the old

feeling, the longing to seek out his enemy, and avenge his master, would re-awake within him. In those nights, when wandering in Glasgow streets, hoping, fearing, he scarce knew what, it might have gone ill indeed with the treacherous Rendano, had his countryman met him. Had he encountered the false wife, her womanhood, despite her sin, as well as the memory of the love Alfred had once borne her, would have been her safety ; and he longed to meet her in order, if possible, to get possession of his master's child. But time went on and on, and at last he almost lost the hope of doing so.



THERE WAS THE WOMAN.

CHAPTER III.

It was the autumn of the fourth year after the death of Alfred Carmichael.

Baptisto still lived his quietly busy life ;

still took his lonely walks at night, still scanned the faces of occasional by-passing women or children, telling himself it was only delayed, but that certainly one day he would be brought face to face with those he sought.

He still strove to cherish this idea, which once had been a settled conviction, but in reality he was losing hope ; and it was more from habit than with any definitely hoped for result that he now

wandered in Glasgow streets apparently prosecuting his search.

In those days the man's innate gentle nature had re-asserted itself. The passionate fits of rage and desires of vengeance against Rendano were less frequent, though the sin and the treachery looked no less black to him ; and unaware of the depths of his own nature—like so many of us—Baptisto, now in his calmest mood, im-

agined that if he were to meet Rendano, it might even be that, letting his long-hoped for vengeance slip from his hands, he would but look his enemy in the face, and pass him—as beneath contempt, perhaps—but still pass him, and leave his master unavenged, as he had charged him to do. Thinking thus one night, Baptisto sighed and shrugged his shoulders, saying,

"*Ebbene !* I need not to trouble myself. My hopes and my vendetta, where are they ? Gone out, both, like the fire from my cigarette."

It was a wet Sunday night, not pouring, but with a soaking yet almost imperceptible drizzle. Baptisto had walked some distance so wrapped in thought that he had paid little heed to the weather, till it was brought very much home to him by the absolute refusal of his cigarette to burn in so wet an atmosphere. He turned aside to relight it in the shelter of a doorway; succeeded at length, turned from his shelter, and—threw away his cigarette with a startled exclamation. For there, leaning against a lamp-post, as if ill or weary, was the woman he had sought so long in vain and found at last. He saw that she recognised him, and going up to her, laid his hand, not ungently, upon her arm; but his working face showed his agitation.

"The child!" he said, "where is the child?"

She laughed bitterly.

"The child! Ah! *his* thoughts were always first of her. Well, if I do not choose to tell you, what then?"

"Woman!" cried Baptisto, "you never cared for the child. Will you keep her then only as another wrong to him you have so greatly wronged already?"

For a moment she was silent.

"Where is he?" she asked sullenly, at length.

Baptisto raised his hand.

"In heaven," he answered, and his head sank upon his breast, as a sob he could not control escaped him.

Again she was silent, and when she spoke it was in a different tone.

"Come to my lodging," she said, "people are beginning to look at us." And they walked on together.

As they went Baptisto looked at her. It was difficult to believe that this wretched figure—wan, and hard of expression, slovenly, and tawdrily dressed—could ever have been the once cherished wife of Alfred Carmichael. He felt some pity for her.

"Are you ill?" he asked, for Agnes shivered and coughed as the keen wind blew in their faces.

"You have only to look at me to see it," she answered; "I don't care though, nothing matters to me now."

"You are in poverty?" he asked gently.

"You can see that for yourself," she answered sharply.

"Have you been to your people? Will they do nothing for you?"

"Nothing! I did not expect they would, though I tried it."

"Only give me the child," said Baptisto, "and I have the power, left to me by your dead husband, to give you what will keep you in comfort as long as you want it."

"Ah! that will not be long. Well, here we are at my elegant lodging. You can arrange here how you will let me have the money—you can give me some to-night, I hope." Baptisto signed assent, and she added with a side-long look at him, which he did not notice: "And you can see the child, and take her away at once, if you like."

"If I like!" repeated Baptisto. They went up a dirty stair, and entered a room on the fourth flat. A lodging wretched enough, indeed; but Baptisto did not regard it. His thoughts, his eyes, were only for one object—his master's child. There was a child in the room, not the little Alison so cherished in the old man's memory, but a dark, weird-looking child, who sat on the bed crooning to itself a quaint tune, and staring at Baptisto with the eyes of his master's enemy. But scarcely glancing at her, he turned with outstretched hands to Agnes:

"The little Alison—my master's daughter," he gasped; "where is she?"

Without a tremble in her voice, without a quiver of mouth or eyelid, she answered him in one word: "Dead!"

Baptisto sank into a chair, his arms upon its back, his face bowed upon them. The woman stood looking down upon him silently; the child crooned its weird ditty, and gazed at them both with wide-open eyes.

"Yes, she is dead," said Agnes at last; she fretted for her father, and died nearly four years ago. She never loved me; it was her father always. And he loved her, but he never loved me. No! He did not!" she cried in angry tones, as Baptisto made a deprecating gesture. "Love! He did not know how to love! I was just a passing fancy to him, nothing more. He gave me riches from his own great wealth, and he tried to get me to behave as he thought right—to hem me round with proprieties till I became just such a prim, staid, walking and talking machine as the women of his own family. He could not see that such a life as that would kill me; but he would have seen it if he had loved me! But he never did; and I never loved him either, though I thought I did at first."

Love!"—here her voice softened—"I never knew what love was till that child's father taught me," and she pointed to the little one still crooning its weird song. "I tried not to love him—I did! I would have been true to Alfred if I could. But Guiseppe *made* me love him—and I did love him, better than my own life. When he died my heart broke, and I no longer cared what became of me."

She went and sat down upon the bed, and took one of the child's little hands in hers.

"It is of this child I want to speak; that is

why I brought you here. I don't care whether you give me money or not—I can't live much longer, anyhow, and I do not want to do so; but I want

you, when I am gone, to take this child for me. I don't say I love her, I never loved anyone in this world but her father. But *he* loved her, and for his sake I want to save his child from the poor-house. And I ask you to do this for me, for the sake of the old time when your master made me believe that he loved me——"

She stopped, for Baptisto stood before her with white face and flashing eyes.

"Woman!" he hissed, "you little know Baptisto Corani if you think he will ever harbour the child of his master's enemy. Had that villain crossed my path I might have spared him, for the sake of the

promise I made my master. You are sacred because you are a woman, and because he did love you once, unworthy as you were. There is money"—he took some from his pocket-book and flung it on the table—"to-morrow I will arrange all, so that you need never want again; but the child of my master's false wife and of the villain that called him 'friend,' shall never be the care of Baptisto Corani. You have learnt how Italians love—learn now how they hate!"

He turned then and left the room, and the last thing he saw was the child's wondering gaze fixed upon him; the last

thing he heard, her crooning voice beginning her song again.

When he reached home he took off the little crucifix he had so long worn

next his heart, and laid it aside in a carved wood cabinet.

He could hardly have told why he did so, but it was his first act on entering his dwelling. Next day he made such arrangements as he judged best, for Agnes to receive the money her

husband had left for her use.

Then he told himself that he had done with it all. Agnes was found, and placed beyond the reach of poverty. Her lover was in his grave. His master's little daughter had gone to her Father, and though Baptisto had wept when he heard it, he knew that it was better so.

And now he tried to forget the unhappy past. He read, he worked at his painting,



ACCEPTING HIS MINISTRATIONS.

harder than he had ever worked before ; till it seemed that his walls would soon be covered with the quaint frescoes, chiefly pastoral scenes. But one thing was noticeable. Formerly all the children in his groups had been fair, light-eyed little angels, or sprites, or rustics, as the case might be ; now the quaint beauty of another child was ever before the artist's eyes. A grave, dark-eyed child, whose face, wierdly picturesque, he traced almost in spite of himself. He was haunted somehow by the thought of that child. Her crooning, plaintive voice sounded often in his ears ; the eyes which had looked at him that night so gravely wondering as he left her mother's room, looked ever at him now, from his own creations on the wall. Baptisto now began to grow restless. Mid-winter came. One night, as Baptisto sat by the fireside smoking, he recollected that it was Christmas Eve, a feast little kept in Scotland, though in his wife's lifetime, he remembered that they had generally kept Christmas-day.

Far into the night the old Italian sat, absorbed in these reveries of the past, when suddenly he heard a slight sound, which caused him to raise his head and listen. It seemed to come from the stair outside his door. He had no lamp burning, but he stirred the smouldering fire into a bright blaze, and, opening the door, stood in the ruddy light looking into the entry before him. Was his fancy playing him a trick, or had he in some dream traced her likeness upon that panel ? Or was it in living truth the child of his dead enemy that leaned against the wall of the staircase, right before him ? Ah ! it was real. The little dark face looked more elfin-like than ever ; but the delicate mouth parted, the great black eyes gleamed with delight, as the child stretched her little arms towards him, crying in baby accents, "Ah, the pretty fire ! Inez is cold ; Inez is hungry."

Baptisto could never bear to see a child in distress. He stooped, lifted her in his arms, and carrying her in to the fireside, proceeded to warm and to feed her. "I can send her to the poor-house to-morrow," he said, as if in apology to himself, as he ministered to the little creature's wants. "One would not thrust a cat from the door on this night."

The child sat buried deep in his great arm-chair, regarding him with her quaint, wondering look, and accepting his minis-

trations quite as a matter of course ; a very self-possessed little woman of about three years old. After she had supped, Baptisto removed her wraps. Upon her little frock he found a note pinned, which read as follows :

"I am dying. In an hour or two at most, I shall be dead. A neighbour writes this as I dictate it. For her father's sake the child shall not go to the poor-house, if her mother can prevent it. To-night—when I am gone—she will be left outside your door. Baptisto Corani, in the name of Christ, whose mercy we all need, I send you my child, and may God deal with you as you deal with her ! I believe you will not cast her out, for I think you are a good man."

This letter, which was merely signed "Agnes," Baptisto read through twice ; while the child upon his knee, encircled by his arm, lay crooning contentedly to herself.

"He would have had it so," he said to himself, "no child—not even theirs, would ever have appealed to him in vain." With gentle hands he undressed her, and placed her in a chair-bed he had arranged. As he sat afterwards by the side of the unconscious infant, a neighbouring clock struck midnight, rousing him from a reverie into which he had newly fallen.

"It is Christmas morning," he said, "the time, we are told, when God would most show to us his love and mercy, and wills that we shall show it to each other.

He sank upon his knees, his bowed head lightly resting on the sleeping infant's breast.

"Thou shalt be to me as mine own, carissima," he murmured, kissing the baby hands with light, soft kisses ; "and be thy mother's words graven ever on my heart—may God deal with me as I shall deal with thee !"

Rising then from his knees, Baptisto went to his little cabinet, and taking thence his mother's crucifix, kissed it, and restored it to its place upon his breast.

From that night little Inez became to him as his own child. He gave her his own surname, and for her sake now he worked not only at his frescoes, but set up an easel, and soon had pictures beginning to live upon his canvas. He wrote to the picture-dealer who had called upon him before, and who was only too glad to arrange to buy his productions.

Little Inez had altogether an artistic

nature, as well as a very lovable one. Passionate she was, and self-willed; but Baptisto rejoiced to see that she showed no traces of the bad qualities of either mother or father. He trained her to his own profession, and before she was fifteen years old he sold her first picture. She was a born singer, too, and sang Scotch ballads, and Italian romanzette to her own accompaniment on a little mandolin which Baptisto had bought for her, and had had her taught to play.

Long before this he had taken the two other rooms Mrs. Baird had to let; but the studio, with its frescoed walls, was always their favourite sitting room.

Opposite his own easel Baptisto had painted the only picture he never explained to Inez. It was in two divisions. The first represented a landscape, in whose foreground, upon the sward, a young fair man lay wounded, while another, with his face turned away, was in the act of returning



SANG SCOTCH BALLADS.

his sword to its scabbard. The other division contained a very fair presentment of his own studio, and in the background, beyond the open doorway, a child-angel standing, with the quaint, old-fashioned dark face of his little Inez.

Inez often said, as she grew older, that she wondered what the face of the other man in the picture was like, and what the picture meant. But Baptisto never explained, nor told her that her own face

was the living image of the man in the picture, save for its innocent and pure expression.

Over the picture Baptisto had painted in illuminated characters two dates; and under them these words: "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."

A Nautical Yarn

Three musicians were out on the spree,
With a ho heave ho!
And they went for a day on the deep blue sea,
With a ho heave ho!
At London Bridge the water was calm,
And never a one felt the least alarm,
And they played afore and they sang astarn,
With a ho heave ho!



But ere the Nore ship hove in sight,
With a ho heave ho!
Those musical chappies were in a rare
With the heave, heave ho! [plight,
Slowly and sadly the notes died away,
And the music was hushed for the rest
of the day,
And the white gulls screamed in the laugh-
With a ho heave ho! [ing spray,



Then they crawled below, and they fervently
swore,
With a ho heave ho!
As they banged their shins on the cabin door,
With a ho heave ho!
And they laid themselves out on the floor to die,
With many a groan and fervent sigh,
And a vain repetition of Oh! Oh, my!
With the heave, heave ho!

A. SYDNEY HARVEY.



A. SYDNEY HARVEY.

Whispers from the Woman's World.

By FLORENCE MARY GARDINER,

Author of "The Kingdom of Home," "A History of British Costume," "About Gipsies," &c., &c.

SLOWLY and sadly has the season of 1892 run its course, and neither socially, financially, or politically can it be remembered as a success. A national mourning at one end, and a general election at the other, with the entire absence of the most popular members of the Royal Family, has caused its premature decease. Every one seemed anxious to cast aside the trappings of woe, and to set forth for green fields and pastures new, in the pursuit of health, wealth, and happiness.

When spirits you would lighten,

Try good Doctor Brighton, sang the bard some fifty years ago, and, with Goodwood at hand, I thought his advice was worthy of consideration; so have taken quarters in that most popular of all watering places, on account of its close proximity to the Duke of Richmond's model race-course, where, during the past week, I have gaily disported myself in the daintiest of costumes, so as to give my readers the benefit of a description of various smart gowns, which have been imported from Paris by their respective owners for this particular function.

One of the most attractive dresses was



MY DRESS FOR GOODWOOD.

of silk muslin, with a design of trails of Gloire de Dijon roses, made over yellow silk, and finished with most artistic touches of mouse-coloured velvet shot with yellow. Another dream of beauty was a white China crêpe gown, embroidered with clusters of heartsease and pink hydrangea. The hem was bordered with an insertion of guipure, and the bodice was finished with folds of lace, fastened by a bow of deep purple velvet. The sleeves were also of guipure, caught in with bands of embroidered crêpe, and reached to the elbow, where they were met by long gloves. A lace bonnet, trimmed with pansies and purple velvet, and a sunshade to match, completed this fairy-like attire.

The costume, however, which excited my wildest envy, was of palest grey bengaline, with long gored skirt, finished at the edge with a double ruche, headed by a band of silver embroidery. The bodice was perfectly plain, but drawn in at the waist with a deep Empire sash of embroidered poplin, fringed with silver; and this material was also used for the sleeves, which were arranged in a series

of puffs to the elbow. The bonnet was of silver lace and pink roses, and a bunch of these flowers was tucked carelessly into the corsage. In the hand was carried a small betting-book with richly-chased silver corners, lined with grey.

I wore the first day a gown of *eau de Nil* silk, covered with *mousseline de soie*, and trimmed with chenille fringe the same shade. Sunshade to correspond, and hat of the gauze, with wreath of pale green oats and plumes of feathers.

There was a great gathering of sight-seers. The lawn, the grand stand, and the coaches being crowded by a brilliant throng, and at every turn the eye met the familiar face of some distinguished member of society.

The hour before the big race of the day is always devoted to luncheon. And what hospitality is shown on these occasions, and what immense trouble is taken by hosts to make their guests happy and comfortable!

A merry party of six I noticed doing full justice to the contents of one of Mr. Benoist's delightful picnic baskets, which had evidently contained all the dainties of the season. These hampers, combined with a table, are so skillfully arranged that they hold in the smallest possible space everything required to satisfy the most epicurean appetite, and in such a portable form that they cannot fail to recommend themselves to those who have once made use of them.

Although for race-meetings our smartest and prettiest frocks must be brought into requisition, for morning wear at the sea-side there is nothing more suitable and appropriate than a neatly-made

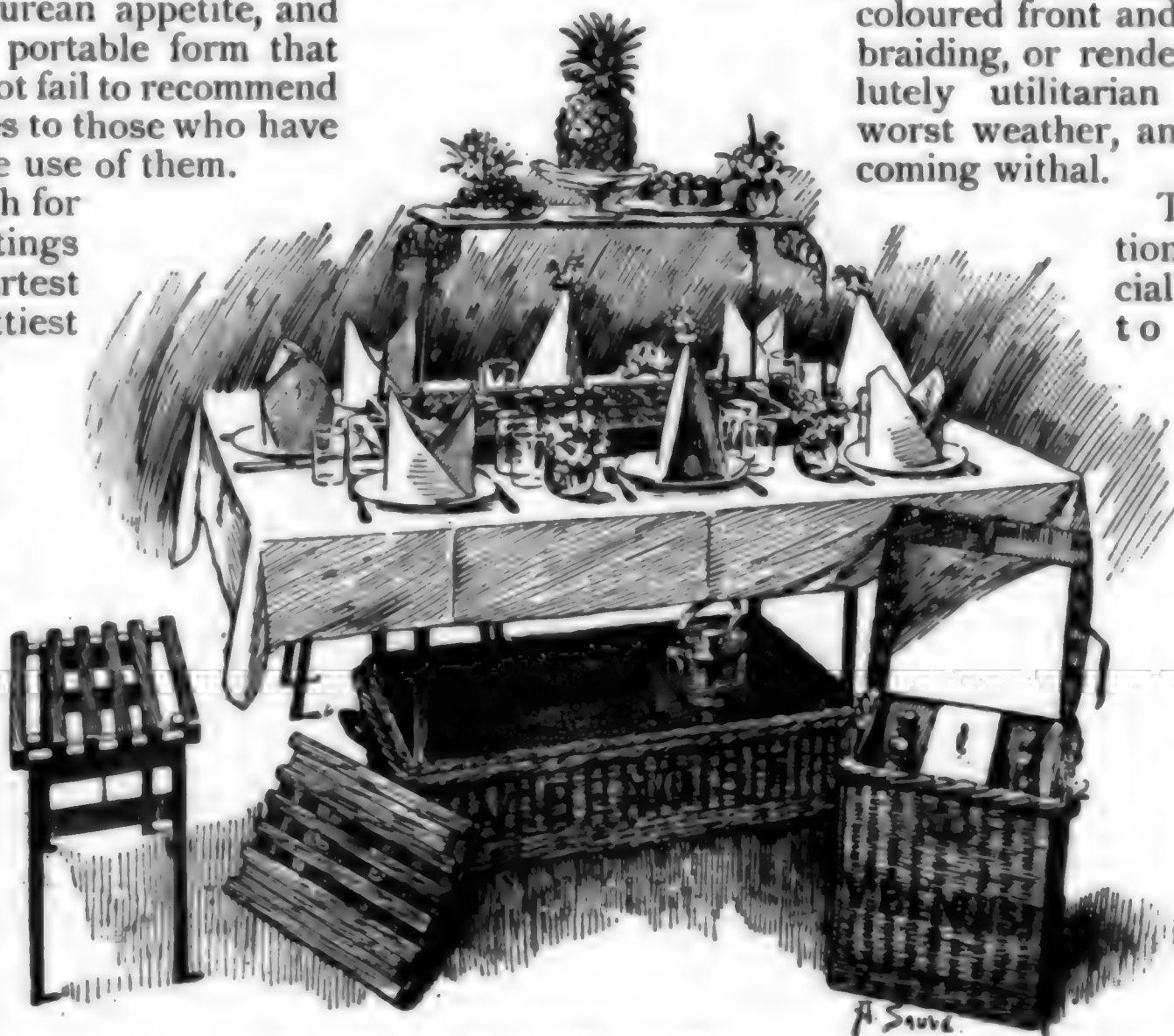
navy serge costume; so, before leaving town I invested in this useful addition to my wardrobe.

A wag, who considered himself a student of ladies' dress, once asked me how it was that blue serge enjoyed an evergreen popularity. Ignoring his jest, in all seriousness I replied,—Because it is the most adaptable material in commercial creation.

So, indeed, it is; for you can make it serve for festive occasions by adding a brightly coloured front and elaborate braiding, or render it absolutely utilitarian for the worst weather, and yet becoming withal.



A NAVY SERGE COSTUME.
(From Charles Gask & Co.)



THE PICNIC BASKET.

Two questions of special interest to women have given rise to lively discussion in the newspapers during the last few weeks. Sir Jas. Crichton Browne set the ball rolling with an inter-

esting lecture on "The Decline of Beauty," and this was quickly followed by a smart leader in a contemporary on "Women and Club Life." With reference to the former subject, it will be generally granted, I think, that the majority of girls can lay greater claims to beauty, and physically are better developed women than their mothers and grandmothers were. Athletics, swimming, drilling, &c., taught by perfectly qualified mistresses, who have made a complete study of their subjects, have done a great deal to improve the figure of the girl of the period, while advanced education has given her a more intelligent expression, and opened her mind in various interesting directions. It certainly must be allowed that up to the present time too much attention has been given in women's colleges, high schools, and similar institutions, to the study of mathematics, classics, &c., since other equally, if not more, important things have had to be sacrificed. But the scale appears to be turning, and in many places girls are taught cooking, dressmaking, &c., on thoroughly scientific principles. What strikes me as another fault to which high school girls are prone, is that from the fact of their having so many lessons to do out of school, and from their parents trying, with the best intentions, to shield them from any interruptions whatsoever, they are apt to grow somewhat selfish over their work, and to become less willing to help in the home, or to do anything that is not strictly included under the head of "lessons."

These "home lessons" I consider are the bane and curse of the rising generation, and put too great a strain upon boys and girls alike, at the most important period of their life.

Clubs for men and women, or for the fair sex only, have multiplied within the last few years, both in London and the provinces, to an extraordinary degree. This, however, may be accounted for to a certain extent by the large numbers annually compelled, by force of circumstances, to struggle for daily bread. In the pursuit of business or pleasure intervals of rest are required, and to within a recent date it was not easy for ladies whose homes lay too far away to revisit them during the day, or to find a resting place anywhere. Neither is it agreeable for women, unless of a very strong-minded order, to go uninvited to the

houses of their friends, with the hope of being asked to luncheon or tea. To have parcels sent unsolicited to the address of a casual acquaintance also requires a certain amount of audacity; and it is asking a favour which it may be difficult to repay, to make appointments with tradespeople at the residence of a comparative stranger.

So for the *fin de siècle* woman, clubs have become one of the necessities of life; but directly they attempt to supply the place of homes for those who have them already, they cease to fulfil their proper functions.

Few men now object to see their womenkind suitably employed, if the necessity arises for them to earn their own livelihood; but they have a very natural prejudice to their rushing into various branches of industry for which they are practically unsuited. If they will refrain from trying to dislodge men from the posts they at present occupy, and will keep to the work for which they are best adapted, and are able to do well and worthily, they will pass unscathed through the bustle of the market-place; but let them once step aside into men's paths, they will receive the same jostling and rough usage that the sterner sex do not hesitate to deal out to each other. There is a law of nature which all our striving and struggling will not alter, namely, that "woman was made to be the helpmeet of man," not his opponent and rival.

Apropos of this subject, it has occurred to me that there is one opening for the well-educated woman of refined tastes which so far, I believe, has had no adherents. I refer to the packing of personal treasures, combined with the active superintendence during household removals. I am aware that certain firms undertake all responsibility in such cases, and send professional packers. But even if this is done, a woman's quick eye and discernment would be of inestimable advantage when the actual arrangement of the furniture was in progress, and also to put those finishing touches which make all the difference in the world between a house and "a home." If one of these "lady helps" would go over the old house with the mistress thereof, and consult with her upon the capabilities of the new one, carefully ascertaining her views respecting the fittings of the various rooms, and would then conscientiously and intelligently undertake the necessary labour

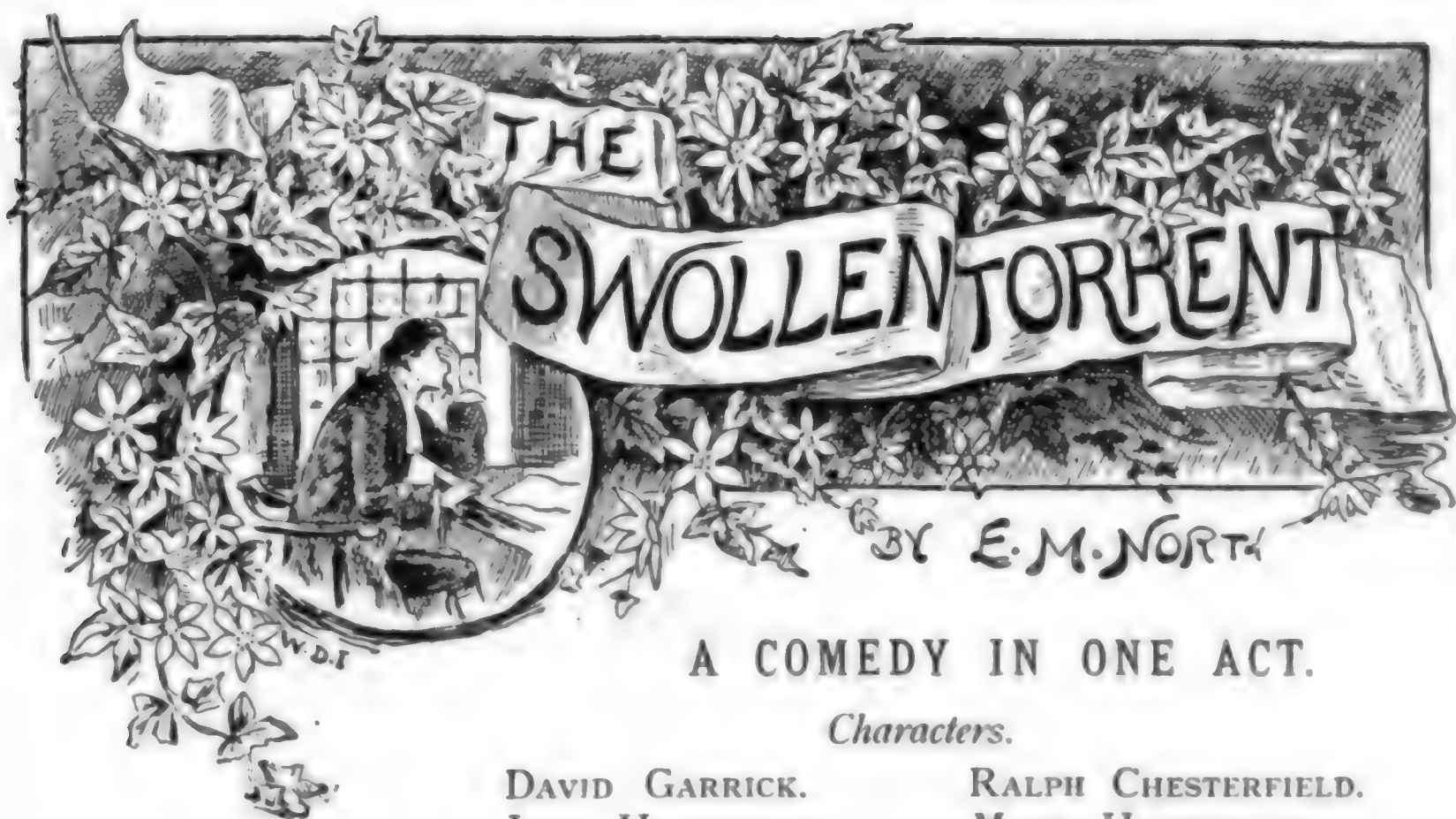
which the busy worker, or woman of the world, finds such a severe task upon her energies, I feel sure that her services would be well paid, and that a fair living might be gained.

Having recently become the happy possessor of an ideal form of fireplace decoration, behind which a fire may be laid ready for lighting, and which does not in

any way impede ventilation, I am anxious that as many of my readers as possible should share my good fortune. It consists of an ornamental cast iron or brass *jardinière*, supplied with hooks by which it may be attached to the bars of the grate, and when filled with flowers forms a pretty and artistic adjunct to the furniture of any room.



"JARDINIÈRE," ARRANGED WITH FLOWERS.
(Barnard, Bishop & Barnard, Norwich.)



A COMEDY IN ONE ACT.

Characters.

DAVID GARRICK.
JOHN HATHERLEY.

RALPH CHESTERFIELD.
MARY HATHERLEY.

SCENE—*A room very poorly but neatly furnished. A bed-sofa in one corner, so arranged that the light from the window can fall on it. Several chairs and a table. Playbills, etc., lying about. Door leading to street. Door leading to inner room. MARY asleep on sofa. RALPH at the foot of the sofa. JOHN at the head. MARY wakes.*

RALPH. Feeling any better, Mary?

MARY. About the same. My head is aching so.

JOHN. Not any better, dear? I almost fear to leave you.

RALPH. What nonsense, man. The crisis will occur in about two hours' time. She is no worse now than she has been many times before. The fever has nearly spent itself. *(To MARY)* Drink this. *(Gives a glass to MARY. MARY drinks.)*

MARY. I don't like your physic, Ralph. It is so bitter.

RALPH. Like many another thing in life. You seldom find a medicine that is pleasant to the taste.

MARY. Why do you look so anxious, John?

JOHN. Do I look so, dear? I did not know it.

MARY. Where do you play to-night? Tell me about it; I've forgotten. My memory seems to go so often now. Ah! sure 'tis he—that it is not a dream?

JOHN. No, love; this is no dream. I've dreamt it often enough to know the difference by now. The one is humble.

perhaps. Not ideal; but gold and solid. The other, glory, fame, and *ideal*; but, alas! hollow.

MARY. To act with David Garrick. Now, after all these years. *(Begins to doze.)*

RALPH. It was a great day for you, old friend, when Garrick met you. May be



ENTER GARRICK, UNOBSERVED.

now your tide has turned, and fortune smiles on you.

JOHN. Who knows? Stranger things have happened.

RALPH. Don't talk so loud. Mary must sleep now. If she can sleep now, all may be well. There will be little danger of the fever taking a worse form. If not, she will be greatly better—almost well when you return. Yes, John. Stranger things have happened. A great future may be in store for you. Who knows? Fate is a strange thing, truly.

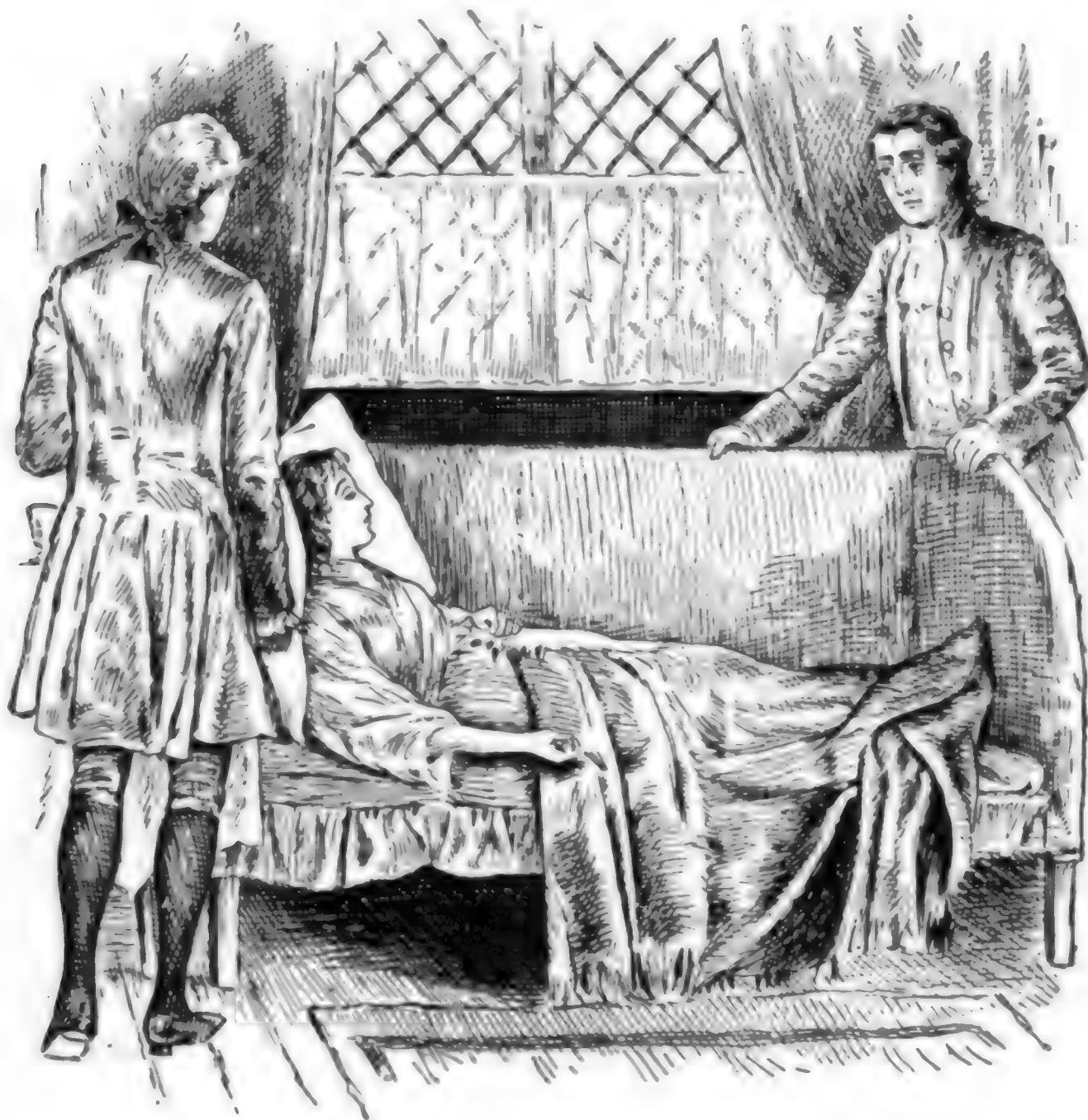
JOHN. Sir, you are too kind. (*Looking round the room.*) But this is no place, sir, to receive you in.

GARRICK. Tut, tut, my friend. I did not come to see your house, but your wife. (*Sees MARY.*) Ah! poor lady. She is indeed ill.

RALPH. No worse, sir, than she has been many times before.

GARRICK. The sea breeze and a change of air would bring her round faster than any physic, I'm thinking.

JOHN. There are many in this city



IF SHE CAN SLEEP NOW, ALL MAY BE WELL.

JOHN. *Fate!* Dare I put my trust in fate?— (*Enter GARRICK, unobserved.*) Fate, which has fought against me all my life. It was "Fate" told me I was an actor.

GARRICK. And now Fate makes you an actor known. Come, my dear young friend. "There is a destiny which guides our fate, rough hew it how we will."

JOHN. You here, sir?

GARRICK. Yes. Why not? Do me the honour of accepting these flowers. (*Gives large bouquet of flowers.*)

who could do with a deal of that, sir. But as it is beyond their reach, why seek and long for it?

GARRICK. I *am* grieved to see her ill like this. (*To RALPH.*) But I fancy she has a good friend in you, sir. And, if it does not pain you, would you tell me what made you forsake your calling as a surgeon to become an actor?

RALPH. My father 'prenticed me to a friend of his—a surgeon. A good man, who knew his work as well as he was old and crusty. A strange wind came and,

whispering in my ear, told me I was an actor. I became—or attempted to become—one. Fell in love. Well. Presently, I met my friend, and am here.

GARRICK. I ask your pardon, sir. I see it was a cruel blow.

RALPH. Aye, and it was that. But to keep the secret was, I ken, the cruellest.

JOHN. Could I've not helped you? Could no one—

RALPH. Forgotten or mistaken love is best forgotten. If a love is false, not there, or broken, crying will not help or mend it. Let such things be. It is dangerous sometimes to stir those waters; they may burst their bounds before you know it, and leave a rent which time may never heal.

GARRICK. True, very true, my friend. When once a love is dead, it must grow afresh itself. No stranger can bring it back to life. No. Nor fan the dying flame.

JOHN. But I was no stranger—

RALPH. No, man, no. It was long before I knew you. (*Aside.* And may God forgive that lie.) But save to those who feel the bond of love, all the world are strangers.

GARRICK. If your love is dead, 'tis better so; for when dead, 'tis dead for ever. The blow is cruel—so cruel, that only those who've felt its sting can know. But then it's over. Far better to die at once than linger on. To never know what rest or quiet is, to hunger on till death in one alternate hope and dread. To live a life so sad, that it seems nothing but a farce, and death a veritable repose. But come; let us talk of something else. I crave your pardon, sir. I have opened an old wound, and the memories can be none too pleasant.

RALPH. They are not unpleasant. They are all I've had to live on ever since I knew the love I hoped had

sprung to life was dying, or, rather, never born.

GARRICK. I've often thought that love was like the stage. A cruel lesson, which all love and long to learn before they've more than gazed upon their task. A cruel lesson, the hardest of all cruel lessons to be overcome. To some only are given the prize; to some, but not to all. And some stray few will reach the ladder's highest rung without much toil or pain. But when all men and women strive to be those few, they who conquer do so by the others' fall.

RALPH. Still, there are many quite willing to learn that lesson, no matter how easy or how hard it may become.

GARRICK. And perhaps to find that the prize is not so mighty after all. That nought about it's gold or solid, but mostly fraud and tinsel.

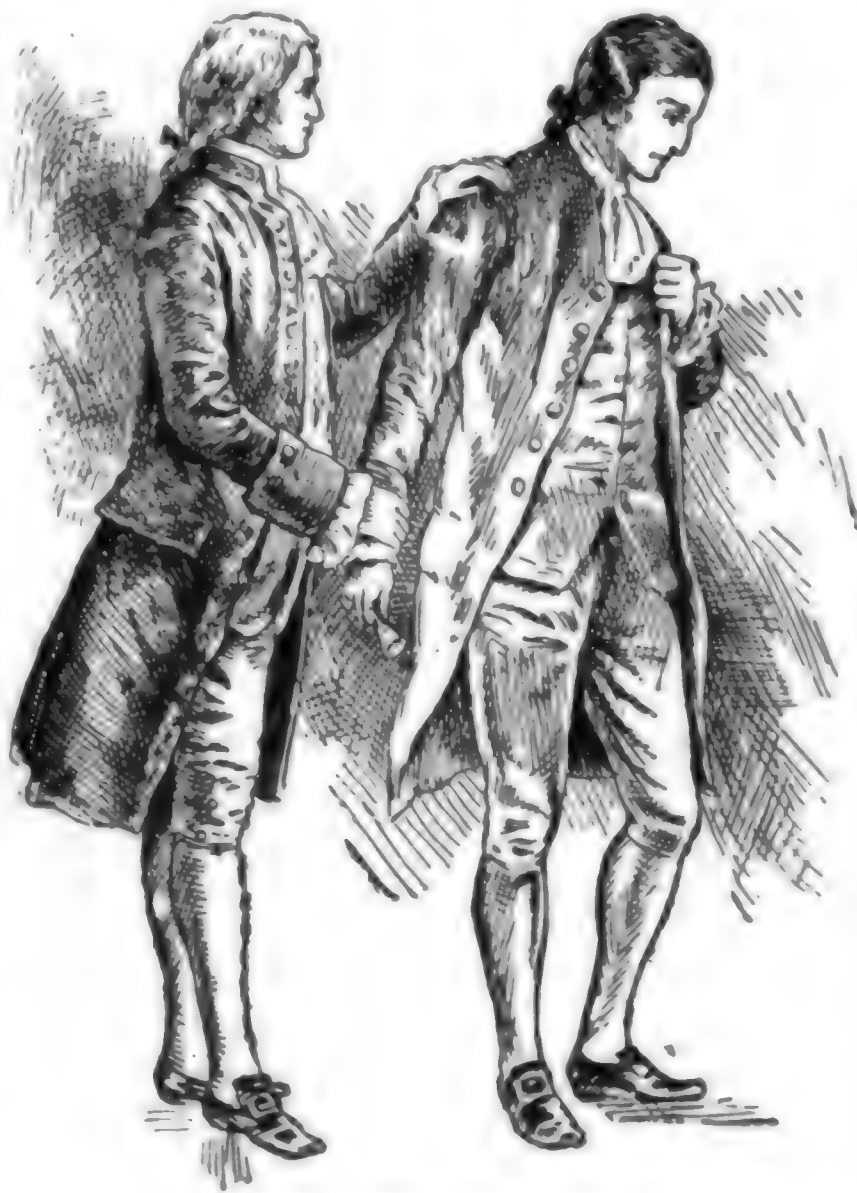
RALPH. Yet, you find hundreds yearly caught and burnt by this same glare and tinsel.

GARRICK. And will be so while time rolls on. Every man is an actor according as he's cast, some one way, some another. Some fit their parts, some do not. 'Tis the public who make a man a famous actor. Make an idol of him. Set him upon a pedestal, then fall down

and worship him—*till the wind changes*. So it behoves all men, all public men whose fortunes lie at the mercy of the crowd, to befriend their fellow.

JOHN. I take it there is little fear, sir, of the wind changing in your instance. You have made your name and fortune by your talent, not by any sudden impulse of the crowd. Your kindness to me I can never—

GARRICK. Tut, tut, my friend. The wind bloweth where it listeth. Who knows but that some day I may ask help of you?



I SEE IT WAS A CRUEL BLOW.

JOHN. It is hardly likely, sir. But if such a thing could happen, may there be taken from me that which in this life I hold the dearest if I should forget or hesitate for one moment to repay your kindness.

GARRICK. Ahem! Come, lad, I'm used to flattery.

JOHN. Pardon me, sir, it is not flattery.

GARRICK. Tut, tut. I know that, friend. But come, we must not tarry. I came to pay my compliments to your sweet wife. But as she sleeps I would not wake her, but will keep them for another time. Let's hope there will be a brave one paid to-night at Drury Lane.

(To RALPH).
Good day, my friend.

RALPH. Good day to you, sir. God bless thee, John. I will tell her all you wish to say. Do not wake her now. Go, and God's help with you.

JOHN. Perhaps you are right. 'Twould be better not to wake her.

GARRICK. Come along, friend; we can not tarry. You'll return in three hours' time to find her well again, ready to share the triumph God knows you well deserve.

[JOHN embraces MARY, still sleeping, and exit with GARRICK.]

(Clock strikes six. MARY wakes).

MARY. (Waking.) What hour was that?

RALPH. What! Awake again, Mary? So soon.

MARY. (Laughing.) Truly, I must be. No—stay. Perhaps I'm talking in my sleep. Are you alone?

RALPH. Truly, I must be. No—stay. Perhaps I'm dreaming. You're feeling better, now?

MARY. You tell me so.

RALPH. And rightly?

MARY. Yes, that you do. Your physic was bitter. Ugh! the taste of it. But its

healing powers, I fancy, must be over-natural. I'll go to Drury Lane to-night, after all.

RALPH. I think not, Mary.

MARY. Why not? I am able. See! (Attempts to rise, but falls.)

RALPH. You'll not go far like that, I fancy. You had best lie down again. I see you are better now. The crisis is past. Yes, the colour's coming back to your cheeks again. You are looking your old self once more. The fever has left you very weak, but far better than we dared even to hope. You have had some hard fights with death.

MARY. Don't look like that, dear Ralph; you frighten me.

Don't talk of death just now. Ugh! it's cold and clammy. Ralph, I'll never get well if you look at me like that. Lean down and kiss me.

(Thoughtfully and tenderly).

Thanks, many thanks, dear Ralph, for all your kindness.

(Suddenly sees flowers.)

What lovely flowers! Where did they come from? Who brought them here? Ralph, dear Ralph, are they for me?

RALPH. (Aside.)

Sweet little

butterfly. (Aloud.) Yes, dear, for you. But guess who brought them.

MARY. Now you want to ask me riddles. Mr. Garrick?

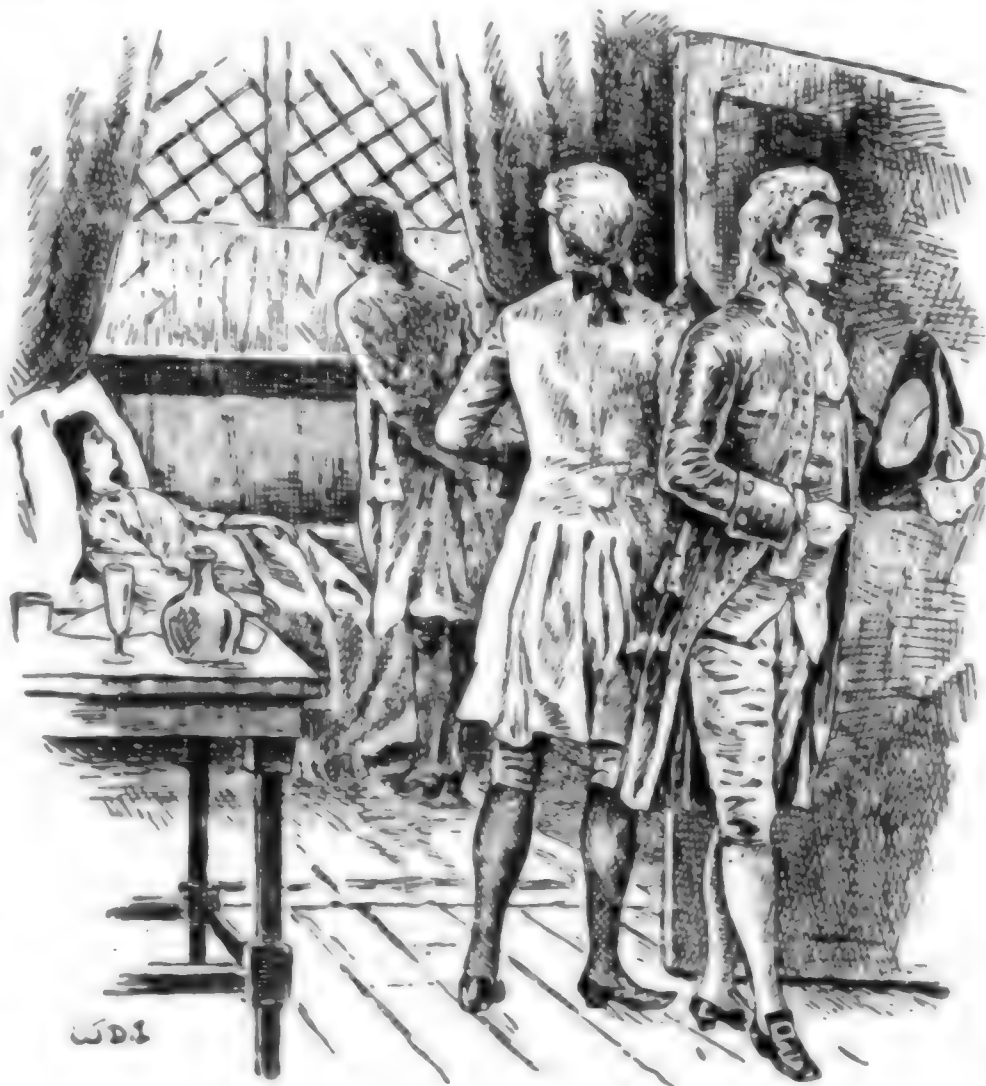
RALPH. Right, at the first time. He has not long been gone.

MARY. Mr. Garrick? No—sure now you're joking. Mr. Garrick? No, it is impossible!

RALPH. A sober fact. 'Twas Mr. David Garrick brought them, with his love to you. He and no other.

MARY. Mr. Garrick! Here—in this house? What did he say?

RALPH. What did he say? Oh, many things, dear child.



JOHN, EXIT WITH GARRICK.

MARY. Tell me them. Go on—go on.

RALPH. Well, he said that love—

MARY. Love! Did he talk of love?

RALPH. Yes. He said that love was like a wind coming from you know not where; brought to life you know not how. Rising, falling, fluttering. A single second more and the storm has passed; all is quiet and still. Again, another second, and it is rushing, tearing madly along like a mighty torrent; it sweeps you from your foothold; twirls you round and round, while your whole frame vibrates beneath its pressure. Yes, Garrick is right. Love can be likened to nothing else on earth. It is a wind, and nothing more.

MARY. Well, I'm not so sure. Perhaps he is right. What else did he talk about? Tell me. I am dying to hear. Go on.

RALPH. Oh, many things; but I've forgotten.

MARY. Forgotten! No, sure you've not forgotten. Think, dear Ralph. Think long and well. Surely you've not forgotten. I'd have drunk in his every word.

RALPH. Perhaps so. But this excitement will undo you; it will make you worse. You had best try to go to sleep again.

MARY. Fiddlesticks! dear Ralph. I don't want to go to sleep. John will be back in an hour from now, and I must be awake when he returns. I want amusing. Amuse me, dear Ralph. Do.

RALPH. Well, if you won't sleep, you had best lay still and quiet.

MARY. Fiddlesticks! dear Ralph, again. I want to be amused. If I lay quiet I only lay and think. (*Dreamily.*) And I've been thinking a lot lately, about the old time before my marriage—when

I was always well—when I first knew you.

RALPH. (*Aside.*) Oh, my God in heaven! make her talk of any other thing but that! Not now, not now. My love is dead—is dead. I cannot bear it!

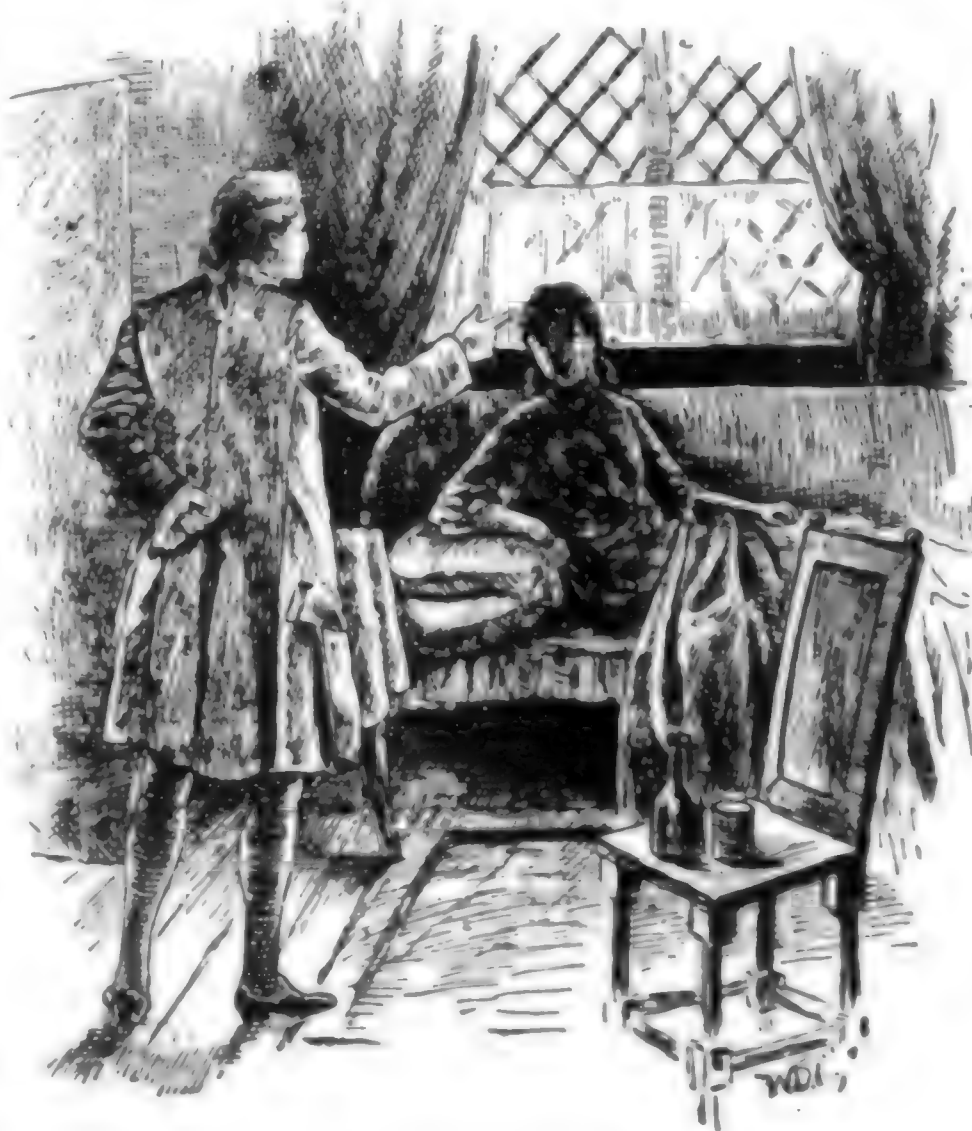
MARY. (*Cont. dreamily.*) You're not listening, Ralph. All the lovers I used to have—all shapes and sizes. Do you remember, Ralph? (*The stage has gradually darkened.*) How dark it's getting. Don't you remember, Ralph, all the lovers I had, good men and bad, and all the flowers and presents they used to bring? And, do you know, I used to fancy sometimes that amongst all my lovers you, in your quiet way, were one. I thought once you loved me.

RALPH. You thought I loved you? You thought I loved?

MARY. Ralph? Ralph?

RALPH. I, who loved you years ago—years before I gave you to another man. Gave you to another man, who knew you scarce as many days as I had known you years—gave you to him without one word. I, who've loved you nearly all your life. And yet, you tell me that you *thought* I loved. Because I did not sigh and moan and say soft words to you—words of senseless meaning, you only thought I

loved. Because I did not force myself upon you, 'twas only by the reason of my love. *I loved you* more than any man on earth; but when I saw I'd lost, I did not tell the world. I made no boast—no scandal of it. I kept my love in secret, and till now have never breathed a word of it to any living soul. For this same reason, you only *thought* I loved. For years I've tried to forget I ever loved. I've tried to leave you, but I dare not. I gave you to the



YOU THOUGHT I LOVED YOU.

man who took away the love you might have given to me. I gave you to him without one word, because I thought you loved him best. To him—a stranger; a man I barely knew. I might have killed him had I liked. He was only young and weak, whilst I was strong and twice his years. But no, I have always been his friend. I never even envied him. And for a reason for all this passion tell you now that *I loved* you. No fancy boyish love, but love. You shrink from me. You shudder as in fright. *But what of me?* Can I keep back the waters that have burst their bounds? *Answer I say! answer!* and answer truth. *I've* nursed you back to life. When you were sick and ill, and at death's door, 'twas *I* watched over you; and 'twas the knowledge I had learnt before I knew you that brought you back to life; and it was *my* skill gave you back to him. *I* never tempted you to break your marriage vows. I kept my love in secret, and till now, through all these years, have never told you that I loved. You've brought this torrent on yourself. You tell me that *you fancied once you thought I loved*. If mine then's not been love, what is?

MARY. Ralph! Ralph! What does this all mean?

RALPH. Mean? Why, surely, you

never took my words in earnest, did you? Have I carried the farce too far? Have I frightened you too much?

MARY. The farce?

RALPH. *Why*, Mary! Don't you remember just now you asked me to amuse you? That you did not want to sleep; that your eyes were heavy; that you must be awake on John's return; that you wanted to be amused. Well, *I am an actor*, that is all, and thought to amuse you with a simple tale to pass away your sleepy hour.

MARY. But your tale was nearer tragedy than comedy, your acting was so real.

RALPH. And what of that? That's the comic part of it. I am an actor, and have but acted as an actor should.

MARY. I was silly to be so frightened; but I knew not what to think. Why, Ralph, you are trembling still!

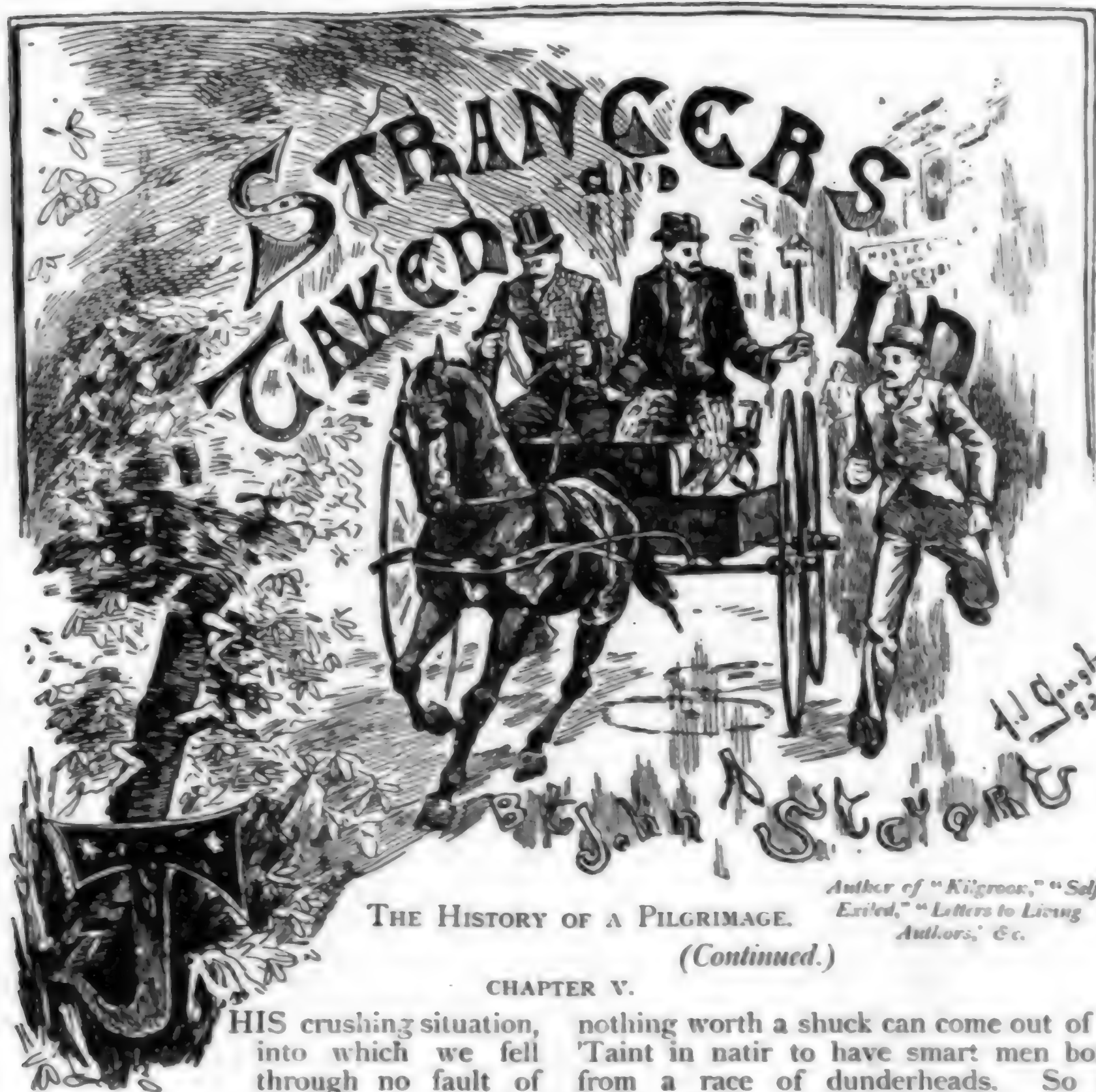
RALPH. I always do when I am nervous. The time is drawing very close. John should be back directly.

MARY. Now you've made me nervous. Hark! hark! His step.

RALPH. (*Aside.*) Thank God! she does not know the truth. Please God, she never shall.

(*Enter JOHN.*)

TABLEAU. CURTAIN.



THE HISTORY OF A PILGRIMAGE.

(Continued.)

Author of "Kilgore," "Self
Exiled," "Letters to Living
Authors," &c.

CHAPTER V.

HIS crushing situation, into which we fell through no fault of our own, gave rise to several serious reflections. Our loss in hard cash and timepieces was considerable, and the blow to confidence was fatal; but we might have borne all that meekly and uncomplainingly, as a part of the programme, if it were not for the assurance—rubbed in, so to speak, at every pore of the body—that we were regarded as gilded British imbeciles whom a benevolent Providence had sent out to be fleeced—fleeced without compunction. In the United States there is no sympathy for that huge mass of humanity known vaguely as fools. These are invariably importations.

"It's like this," a kindly Yankee explained to us. "The ole world's played out; effete, decrepit, sinking, tottering to its fall, as you might say. Natirally

nothing worth a shuck can come out of it. 'Taint in natir to have smart men born from a race of dunderheads. So in Yurrip they manufactirs fools, and we consume the article, so to speak. It's a'most the only import on which there's no dooty."

Native born Americans are so like Major Bagstock, that is, so cute and devilish sly, it would be a waste of time on their part to try to impose on each other, so they impose on foreigners, and they do it with pre-eminent success. Brown once knew a man who cherished a grudge against the Americans because his great-great-grandfather's second cousin's brother's wife had been slighted by George Washington; and he went out with the avowed purpose of "busting up" the country. He crossed the Atlantic in the finest saloon that money could procure on the best of steamers, with a special table and half-a-dozen stewards all to himself. He made no

secret of his object, and naturally his mission excited a good deal of interest. Well, he spent a lively three weeks in the free and independent west, then he was packed home in the steerage as a destitute alien. That's a way the Americans have of receiving visitors. Strangers in America may be hungry and have nothing to eat, and thirsty and have nothing to drink, and sleepy and have nowhere to lay their

am not quite sure what "rock-bottom" means, but that's how all true Americans begin. Probably it means an instinct to take in your neighbours; at any rate, that seems to be the royal road to wealth in the Great Republic.

As we didn't understand the trick, our capital began to ebb. And there wasn't the least sympathy for us, not the least. Everybody to whom we confided our tale



"IT'S LIKE THIS," A KINDLY YANKEE EXPLAINED TO US.

heads; but they can never complain of not being taken in. Our dear cousins are remarkably hospitable in that respect. On the whole, perhaps it is best to go to America without any money; it's the only way of having some after awhile. All American millionaires begin without a cent, the few who start with a little borrowed capital being obliged to lose it before they can make headway. It's a good plan to start on "rock-bottom." I

of wrong and woe, snickered in their sleeves, and remarked that there were some right smart men in the States. The fact that we had a real live duke did not make things any easier for us. Indeed, I was sometimes inclined to think the title did us harm; but I wouldn't have said so for the world; for poor Smith felt bad enough without any such grumblings on my part, though he valiantly kept up his heart, and even made a pretence of

laughing at our losses. But I knew that he lay awake at night—I knew it from the sound of his sobbing, and the tracks of tears on his pillow.

The thing that galled him most was the unaccountable manner in which the American nobles, the immortal 400 of New York, kept aloof. They did not seem to be aware of his Grace's existence, or, if they were, they never let on.

"Why, dash their gilt hides," said Smith, in a moment of vexation. "Do they know what it means to have a member of the English aristocracy in their midst—the bloomin' idiots!" Smith's British blood came out there; but he soon cooled down. "I am quite sure," he added pathetically, after a while, "that if they only knew I was here, invitations would pour in upon me."

Brown ventured to mention the free advertisements in the press.

"Don't be so innocent," replied the Duke. "You ought to know by this time the best people, the upper ten especially, never read the papers. If you notice when some great man replies to some criticism in the press, he always says, 'My attention has been drawn to so-and-so,' not 'I have seen so-and-so.' It is clear that the attention of the four hundred has not been called to my presence in New York. Now one of two things must be done, and done quickly. Either we shake the dust of this place off our feet for ever, or we take steps to make ourselves known to select circles."

We unanimously agreed it would be a pity to turn tail and run; so we decided to make a move on the select circles. The difficulty was to know where or how to begin. As usual Smith himself, I mean the Duke, was the one to suggest a course.

"I see by this morning's paper that Vanderbilt was out in Central Park yesterday, driving his 2.25 horse, Blue Dragon," he said. "I'll go out to drive, too, and see if I don't create a sensation."

As we did not know the fashionable and proper vehicle to hire, we hurried to Central Park to reconnoitre. Many nurses were there with gorgeous perambulators, and a few sporting blades with 2.25 horses yoked to buggies. These were



BROWN JUMPED UP BESIDE HIM.

tearing about in a manner to quicken the blood.

"That's it," cried his Grace enthusiastically. "It would be a graceful thing to patronise local customs. I thought of a high-wheeled dog-cart; but I'll have a buggy instead. Vanderbilt drives early. Now, my hearties, to conquer New York."

We found our way to a livery stable, and selected our equipage. The livery man got his own terms—fifteen dollars for two hours. That was exactly three times what he had a right to charge; but we were getting accustomed to extortion by this time; and besides, we were in no mood to wrangle like Jews about price. "Let's do the thing tip-top," said the Duke. "This iniquitous stableman may help to make us known." As it turned out he helped greatly; but of that presently.

In America, when you hire a vehicle they do not send out a driver to take care of you. You are supposed to do that yourself. If you are accustomed to horses, the exercise is pleasant; if not, it is rather uncertain. Now, Smith could have told a horse from an elephant anywhere, for he had seen horses often. When he lived at Brixton, and was en-

gaged all day in addressing circulars in the city, he occasionally took the 'bus of a morning. Besides, he had once or twice ridden in cabs; but he had never touched a rein, or handled a whip, and in the whole course of his life he had not been on a familiar footing with a single horse. Yet that liveryman had no hesitation in giving him charge of the fiercest animal in New York. No doubt he was led to do this from Smith's swagger about managing a four-in-hand in Hyde Park, and his brazen request for "a beast that can go, you know."

It has been remarked by wise people, that the gods sometimes confound mortals by giving them what they ask for. I don't know why they should have had a spite against Smith, except on the ground that he was "down on his luck." He got a beast that could go, with results that were not anticipated.

As a buggy holds but two people, Brown was to accompany the Duke, and I was to watch the performance in the Park, and report the impression.

The horse danced when he came out, threw back his ears, made a feint of darting at the company, and in a general way showed a playful and humorous disposition. It took three men to harness him, and they did not succeed without the aid of some vigorous swearing. I thought Smith looked a trifle nervous; but he took his seat with an air of gaiety and confidence, and Brown jumped up beside him.

"You'll see the sensation we'll make," whispered his Grace to me. "By Jove! this is going to be immense."

Just then the stableman slapped the horse with his open hand, and the horse, by way of suitable acknowledgment, shook its head, and let fly with its heels.

"Is the brute vicious?" asked Smith.

"Quiet as a lamb, an' a devil to go," said the stableman, "aint you, Betsy? Aint you as meek as a saint, an' faster'n ole Nick, an' only the man behind can handle the ribbons? There now, ole gall, show yer paces."

Smith gathered up the ribbons, and Betsy started, I following to the best of my ability.

Presently we got into Fifth Avenue, and Smith tried to head Betsy for the main entrance to the Park, which was hard by. But ignoring both it and Smith's efforts to guide her, she dashed

past, and down Fifth Avenue, like a runaway locomotive, her heels striking fire enough from the flints to burn down a city. Smith wrestled gallantly, and, by superhuman exertion, induced her to turn and come back. A second time she passed the gate like a flash, though Smith pulled with all his might to turn her in. When he found he had failed, he cast a glance at me, as if to say, "Did you ever see such a d——d fool of a horse? I wish to heaven I was well out of this."

With Brown's aid he brought her about again, knocking down six pedestrians on the side-walk, and two policemen who had vainly tried to bar the progress of Betsy. The sensation was beginning earlier than was expected. Back she bolted in her first course; but both occupants of the buggy were now driving, and they got her through the gate with no worse mishap than running down a perambulator with two infantile millionaires in it, and leaving the maid in hysterics. I restored the squalling millionaires to their places, kissed the maid to soothe her, and told her the Duke of Dunnington would apologise in person to her master. In the twinkling of an eye a surging crowd was pressing in upon me with cries of "Lynch him," and indignant shouts of "Did ye see the furrin varmint a kissin' of a free and independent American lady? He's put her screamin' mad. Make mince-meat and sausages of him." And they nearly did. I escaped, just in remnants, so to speak, and left more of my clothing in the hands of the mob than I could well afford to lose.

Meanwhile Betsy was warming to her work in a manner that was attracting the universal attention of the people in the park. Her gait was peculiar, for she was a pacer. Now a pacer does not canter or gallop; under no provocation will it do these things. It simply stretches its neck, and flings its four legs into space, and looks to see if there is an express train about to try odds with. The motion is not graceful; but the speed—ye gods, the speed! You should have seen Betsy. You should have stood beside the track and seen that buggy shoot past—a mere vision of fluttering feet, and streaming mane, and fiery nostrils, and flashing wheels; and over all two white, strained faces. Talk about Roman chariot races and a 2.25 pace. Here was such a chariot flight as the Romans had never dreamed of, and the pace was a 1.25 pace—a flying

pace, a pace that left the wind behind, and made the birds stop and wonder what new mode of locomotion had been invented.

"I'll tell you what it is, stranger," said an admiring and excited spectator to me, "thet hoss is jest a streak of greased lightning. Halleluiah, but it does go. Now, if you was inclined to bet——" I shook my head sadly and moved off.

"Jerusalem," cried a man at my elbow, as soon as I had taken up a new position, "see the darned thing go. Now I call that bewteeful—that is pacing and no mistake. If you was disposed to bet——"

I cast an imploring look at him and moved on again.

Presently a third man said:—

"Aint that jest bully now? Reckon it's a Cowboy showin' off an unbroken colt. Susannah, sech a pace! and the fun aint half over. Now, stranger, if you had any idea of puttin' on a little money——"

"Sir," I pleaded, "you see before you a hapless stranger. Have mercy upon me. I am far from home and parents, and there is a conspiracy to make me bet. Take pity on a lonely orphan."

His lower jaw sank as he slowly examined me with saucer eyes.

"Waal, you air a comical cuss," he remarked at length. "Orphant away from yer parients, air you, an' clean agin bettin'. My—my! what a innercent lamb to be out all alone in this wicked world. I'll bet, now, when yer at home, mammy gives ye clam-pies and Johnny-cakes fur bein'



so good. Ducky, I like you. It does me good to clap my eyes on innercent youth. Hope mammy's well. If I was you, sonny, I'd toddle back to her." I left that man; and as I was going away, he and some of his friends began to shout after me, "Does your mother know you're out?"

Central Park is well provided with eminences. I toiled to the top of one at least fifty feet high, and watched the Duke. It was some time before I could fix him, for he flew so fast round the circle of the park that the eye could scarcely keep up with him. Betsy was certainly doing it in glorious style. People crowded along the track and cheered, and fresh multitudes were hurrying in at all the entrances to see the fun. On the first round I limped down to the track-side, and shouted to Smith, "Hullo! old fellow, you seem in a deuce of a hurry." But he was half-a-mile ahead ere I could finish the sentence. There was another buggy with a fast horse a hundred yards in front, and Betsy had clearly made up her mind to pass it. The Duke hung on to the reins with his whole force, but Betsy did not seem to be aware of it. On she sped, her neck craned, her legs flying loose, and the buggy spinning like a top at her heels. The excitement was getting intense. The throng that lined both sides of the track fifty deep, shouted itself hoarse, and bookmakers were beaming. The betting was twenty to one on Betsy. Round whirled the Duke again in his headlong flight, pulling desperately with both hands, for Brown had taken charge of the whip. Betsy was doing it better than ever. The people shrieked to let her out, and a cordon of police tried to stop her. She went through them like a bolt from a bow, apparently ignorant of their existence. On the third round the betting was fifty to one, and the Duke throwing his entire weight on the ribbons. On the fourth round he was standing in the buggy, minus his hat, and with hair and coat flying wildly in the wind. Betsy had diminished the distance between herself and her competitor to fifty yards, and the betting was seventy to one. Other vehicles crawled out of the way, and horsemen stood still to gaze in wonder. The people were frantic; never had they seen such an exhibition in Central Park. The Duke was assuredly making a great sensation.

Two rounds more, and the distance

between the rivals was only ten yards, and it was a hundred to one on Betsy. Smith had his feet against the dashboard, and the look in his face seemed to say he did not particularly enjoy the situation. The man in front tickled up his fast horse; Betsy saw it and responded, and the vast concourse roared. At the next round, Betsy was neck and neck with her rival; then, throwing her feet further into space, she spurted, drawing quickly ahead. It seemed as if all New York sent up a yell when she triumphed. The shout gave Betsy fresh spirit, and she flew round the course, just to show what she could do after gaining a stiff victory.

She might have gone on for ever if she had not changed her mind, for nothing earthly could have stopped her. But she liked variety, and so when she next came to the entrance she thought it would be an entertaining thing to dash out through the seething crowd. Shrieks of fright and pain rent the air at this new manœuvre, and the Duke and Brown pulled for their lives. It made no difference to Betsy. On she plunged amid screams and execrations, as she had plunged amid shouts of glee and encouragement. Outside she smashed a carriage, then bent a lamp-post, and finally tried a tilt with a dray. The dray had rather the best of it; but Betsy was still unconquered. The buggy was in shivers; but she went her way, taking the shafts. When she felt that the crisis had come, she cast a backward glance at Smith, as if to say, "So you are come to grief, are you? Well, you must admit you have had a good spin, anyway. Sorry I can't tarry. Take care of yourselves," and she went her way, leaving the Duke and Brown prostrate in the wreck of the buggy.

I hurried up, and asked Smith how he felt. "You have made an immense sensation," I said encouragingly. "I suppose so," he answered feebly. "The beast did go, didn't it? I suppose you didn't notice Vanderbilt in the crowd. Old man, I think that drive will do me for a long time."

We did not see Vanderbilt; but we saw a police commissioner, who invited the Duke and Brown to a private conference on the subject of furious driving. By the customs of the country it was an invitation they could not refuse; and as they hobbled painfully away, the jeering crowd that followed them made various sugges-

tions as to the best mode of having their blood.

The humiliations of that afternoon had better be passed over swiftly. Democratic policemen took an English duke and cast him into a Republican prison, with as little respect or ceremony as if he were a native boodler new convicted of petty theft. Though Smith vehemently swore to his ducal rank, they didn't heed him, and they

only laughed when he vowed he would see that the British lion gave the neck of the American eagle a twist it would not get the better of. "You outrage a British subject," cried Smith indignantly, "see if a British gunboat does not avenge his wrongs. I tell you you will not lay hands on an Englishman with impunity." But they only laughed the more.

(To be continued).



LEAVING THE DUKE AND BROWN PROSTRATE IN THE WRECK.

Editor's Gossip.

London—that is, fashionable London—is in brown holland and curl-papers. Its denizens and votaries are away stumping the country, from John o' Groat's to Land's End, for votes of admittance to the best Club in London—and Mayfair is in charge of the caretaker and policeman.

* * *

It is not my intention to follow our law-makers on their rounds of stump oratory. This is the special and particular business of the Daily Press, and right well they do it, too. Fleet Street, the home of the big London Dailies, has been, for the last few weeks, in a perfect roar of excitement till far into the night, and even into the early hours of the morning.

"Latest results of the Polls," is the cry of the street urchin from morning to night, and as the shades of evening fall, the magic lantern is brought into requisition, and the latest returns are shadowed forth to the surging crowd, patiently waiting below. The pros and cons are eagerly discussed, and the air is rent with cheers and groans. Here one sees the man of broadcloth and shiny silk hat, elbowing the son of toil in well-worn tweed or fustian—both full of the excitement of the moment, and perchance closely arguing their pet theories. Whilst skirmishing around them all are the light fingered gentry, who "toil not nor spin," gathering in their harvest of watches and purses, and making hay while the magic lantern shines.

* * *

Henley Regatta, usually the venue of all that is bright and smart, has this year been shorn of much of its prettiness, chiefly through the counter attraction of the Elections. Henley weather also prevailed, and the wind it blew, and the rain it rained; and these two potent causes were quite sufficient to account for the poor attendance of spectators, and the absence of those bewitching toilettes dear to the feminine heart, and which so materially help to brighten and enliven our national regatta.

The floral decoration of the houseboats, which is usually a sight in itself, was

almost spoilt by the gale of wind and rain that raged on the first day, and very few of the owners had the heart to renew their ruined treasures; so that when I got down on the second day, the beauty of the flowers was gone.

* * *

The chief feature of the regatta proper was the race for the Diamond Sculls, for which Mr. Ooms, a Dutchman, and Mr. MacHenry, a Frenchman, had entered against our own scullers, the former winning in the final heat in the most easy manner.

It seems rather an anomaly that the Blue Ribbon of our Amateur Rowing Clubs should be captured by a foreigner. In professional rowing, we have long since seen our chief prizes borne away by Australians and Canadians, but we thought our amateurs were safe.

Mr. Ooms hails from The Neptunus Club of Amsterdam, and is certainly a fine specimen of an athlete, and well deserves his success. I hope, however, that next year will see the trophy brought home again.

* * *

I hear that Mr. Sims Reeves is about to take a class at the Guildhall School of Music. This flourishing institution, which is a really fine and commodious building, stands a little way back from the Thames embankment. It is doing a real service to the art of Music and Singing, and I hear that many of the pupils may be expected to make their mark in the art they have chosen. Mr. Herbert Reeves, son of the great tenor, has, I believe also, an appointment at the same school.

* * *

I have had quite a number of nice letters from lady readers in reference to the short article, "Whispers from the Woman's World." Most of them make the complaint that the article is not long enough. This is a fault which I am sorry to say cannot be very well altered; the limited space of THE LUDGATE MONTHLY precludes my giving more than a few pages to this series. However, it is a fault in the right direction, as when *more* is wanted it is

very evident that the article is appreciated by those for whom it is intended, which is the great ambition of an editor's life.

* * *

That scourge of the East, cholera, I am sorry to see is rapidly covering the eastern portion of Europe, and has advanced as far as Paris, where several deaths are already reported. The South of Russia is in full possession of the terrible epidemic. Baku, the seat of the petroleum oil wells, is now as a city of the dead; all the merchants and well-to-do inhabitants, and many of the better class working people, have fled for their lives, and hardly a factory is at work. Quarantine is rigidly enforced at the principal Black Sea ports, and thousands of fugitives are undergoing quarantine. The medical staff is sadly inadequate, and it appears that the cholera has obtained a complete mastery of this district. Although there is no sign yet of its appearance in England, still no loophole should be left open that prudence and foresight can suggest to protect ourselves from its invasion. It behoves the authorities here, generally, and the medical officers at all our seaports specially, to be on their guard. We ourselves, also, can do much to prevent its attacking us, by strict attention to all sanitary arrangements—unripe fruit, bad water and foul drains are some of the chief causes of its spread, and should be specially guarded against.

* * *

We, in this tight little island, experience but seldom, and then only in a lesser degree, the effects of those terrible subterranean disturbances so common amongst countries less fortunately situated geographically than ourselves.

The volcano Etna is again in violent eruption. The lava is reported to have already overrun several villages and small towns in its vicinity. Large tracts of cultivated land have been destroyed, with the farms and all the worldly possessions of the cultivators; and as I write, there does not appear to be much sign of its immediate cessation.

* * *

I am sorry to say that owing to want of space I have been compelled to hold over the Cricket article this month. The County of Kent, however, will appear in the September number, accompanied by a full page of the Kent Eleven, and photos

of the chief members of the team, with an article by Mr. W. H. Patterson, the well-known gentleman player.

* * *

A well-known oculist authority, writing on the subject of reading and its effect on the eyes, says that long lines of print are very harmful to those who read much, as the eye cannot naturally take in the full line without injury to the sight, unless the head is moved to aid the eye—and that very few readers do this. The result is that the sight is strained, and ultimately much injured. He recommends short lines of type, so that the eye can take in the whole line without straining, and indicates that columns two inches wide, of good bold type, is about perfection for reading.

I am pleased to say that "The Monthly" therefore comes close under this category, and that my readers will not experience any injurious effects to their eyes from its perusal.

* * *

One of the many curious businesses of the East is that of collecting birds' nests for human food. These delicacies, for as such they are esteemed, are formed by a species of swallow which builds its nest from a gelatinous secretion from the salivary glands, forming a kind of isinglass. The chief place of collection is in the Andaman Islands, and the best quality nests fetch their weight in silver, and are chiefly exported to the principal ports of China and Japan.

* * *

It is a long way to hark back from China to the United States, where the labour question is now causing serious thinkers to look forward with much anxiety as to the results of the various strikes which are going on all over the Eastern States. The most serious conflict took place at Carnegie's Ironworks, where some thousands of men turned out against a reduction of wages. Non-unionists were taken on to fill their places, with the result that the former workers took the law into their own hands and turned them out by force. This brought a force of police and detectives on the scene; these arrived in several barges, but before they could land, the strikers commenced firing on them with revolvers, and turned a cannon on the barges, compelling the officers of the law to surrender and give up their

arms. They were then marched off to the gaol and locked up by their conquerors. The final scene has not yet been played. Of course the law will be vindicated, but does it not seem that there should be some tribunal other than brute force or starvation to regulate disputes between capital and labour? We are told that "the labourer is worthy of his hire," and it does not need proof that the world was made only for the few, but for the many. The difficulties of the whole question are immense, and we have felt the burden in this country as acutely as others: it is a question that must be solved sooner or later, and the sooner it is taken in hand the better it will be for the world at large.

* * *

There has just passed away one of the active spirits in the world of progress. Mr. Cyrus Field died on the 12th July, at New York. He was the pioneer of the Atlantic cable. The first cable between America and England was successfully laid in 1866 by the *Great Eastern*, under the auspices of Mr. Field. Several failures had taken place previously, but he still held to his project, and after encountering and overcoming the indifference and hostile criticism which was raised against his enterprise, finally succeeded

in the end he had tenaciously held in view for many years.

* * *

For twelve years he, with a few kindred spirits, were incessantly working at the scheme of connecting the two Continents by telegraphic communication. Their financial troubles were a part of the buffeting they had to endure. At one time a share of the value of £2,000 (\$10,000), in the New York, Newfoundland, and London Telegraphic Co., sold for £2 (\$10). The happy purchaser subsequently receiving dividends of £150 per annum for his investment of £2.

* * *

Charles H. writes, asking if THE LUDGATE MONTHLY intends producing football photos during the coming winter, as he and many of his friends were greatly pleased with those published last season. I can scarcely yet answer this enquiry, as I have not yet settled the future so far ahead, but I think it is quite likely that football will occupy some space in the magazine during the autumn and winter.

* * *

Will Fabian; H. R. F., L. M., Sweet William, and Gerty, please accept my thanks for their interesting letters and good wishes.

